（著者撮影：大野晋一）

“神”として“妖怪”として
「天狗」ほど日本人に親しまれた存在はない。
悪魔をヒーローに仕立てた作者としては
天狗を放っておく手はない。
いつか新しいイメージで創りたいと考えていた。
情熱のすべてをかけて、
天狗の決定版にしようと思っている。

永井豪

天空之狗

TENKU NO INU

1

永井豪
とダイナミックプロ

モーニング
KC961

天空之狗

TENKU NO INU

1

永井豪とダイナミックプロ

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狗井新平

元フリーター。
旅行で訪れた火鎮命村で遭遇した事件で、
自らの隠れた能力を知り、
超能力者集団“天空之狗”に参加する。

天空之狗

TENKU NO INU

1

永井豪
とダイナミックプロ

MORNING KC

モーニング
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天空之狗

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TENKU NO UMI

THE HOUNDS OF HEAVEN

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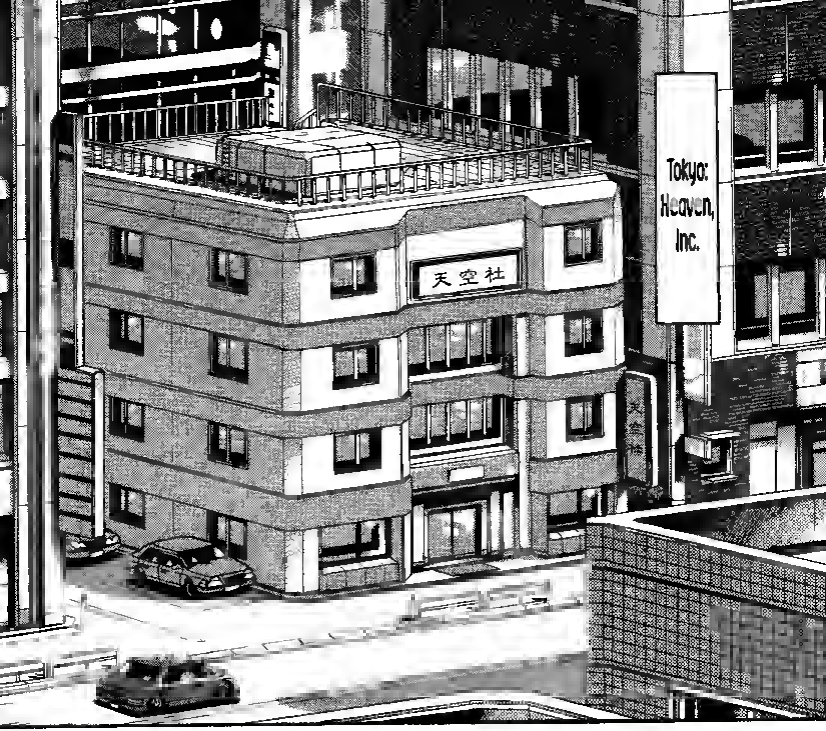
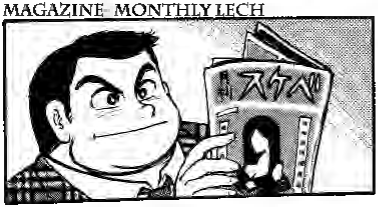
PROLOGUE: CARBUNCLE FACE

February 23, 647. A giant star roaring like thunder streaks from east to west across the sky.
IS THAT A SHOOTING STAR?
SHOOTING STARS DON'T MAKE NOISE!

WHAT IS IT, HITOMI ?
WHAT IS IT, HITOMI? I'M COMING IN!

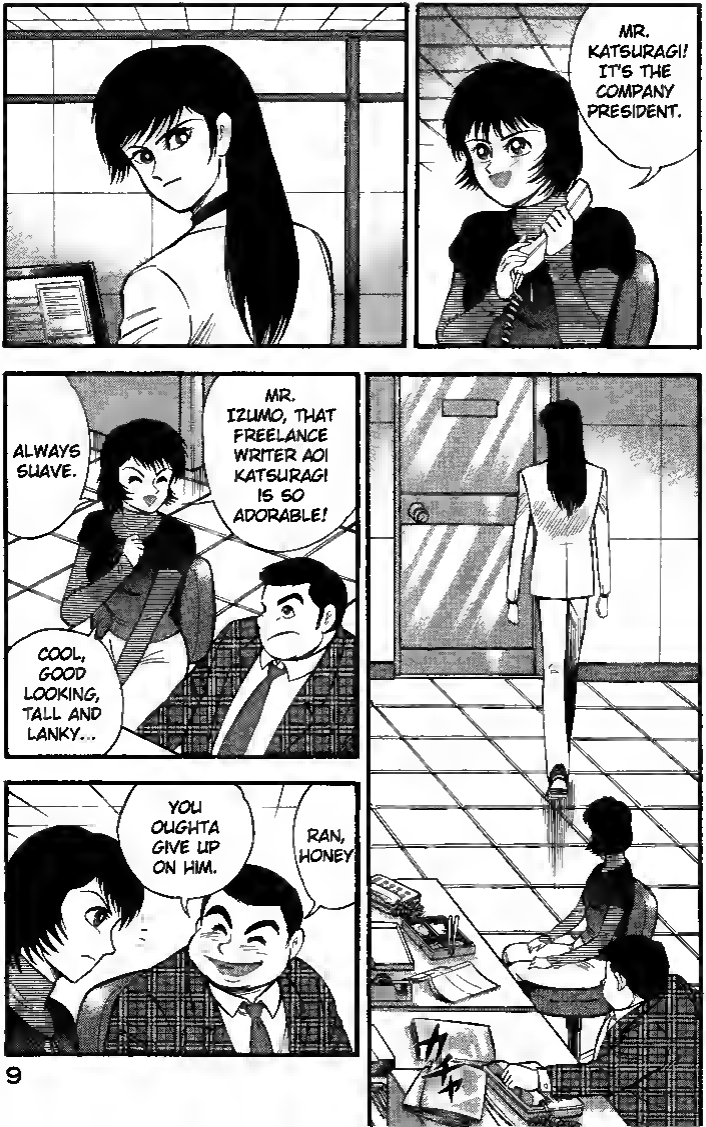


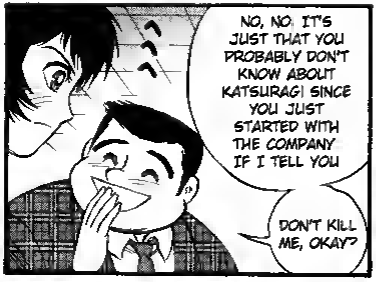
MAGAZINE: MONTHLY LECH

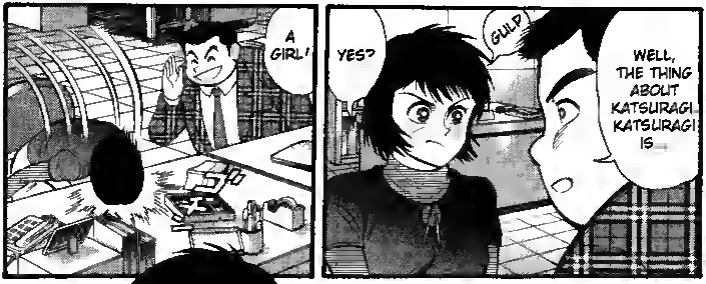


DESK: CHIEF EDITOR

AAAMA! HEY, BUDDY, IZUMO HERE!
HELLO. THIS IS THE RIDDLE MAGAZINE MONTHLY MYST.
THE CHIEF? HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S IN A BAD MOOD. IF YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT GETTING TOGETHER FOR DRINKS, LOOK NO FURTHER THAN ME, FUTOSHI IZUMO!
カフェルシャ
HELLO
HA-HA-HA. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT A RISQUÉ HOSTESS CLUB IN SHINJUKU?
IT'S OKAY. SAFE BUT RISQUÉ... HE HE HE.


MR. KATSURAGI! IT'S THE COMPANY PRESIDENT.
MR. IZUMO, THAT FREELANCE WRITER AOI KATSURAGI IS SO ADORABLE!
ALWAYS SUAVE.
COOL, GOOD LOOKING, TALL AND LANKY...
RAN, HONEY
YOU OUGHTA GIVE UP ON HIM.


NO, NO. IT'S JUST THAT YOU PROBABLY DON'T KNOW ABOUT KATSURAGI SINCE YOU JUST STARTED WITH THE COMPANY IF I TELL YOU
DON'T KILL ME, OKAY?
WHAT?
MEANIE! I CAN THINK ANYTHING I WANT OF ANYBODY!



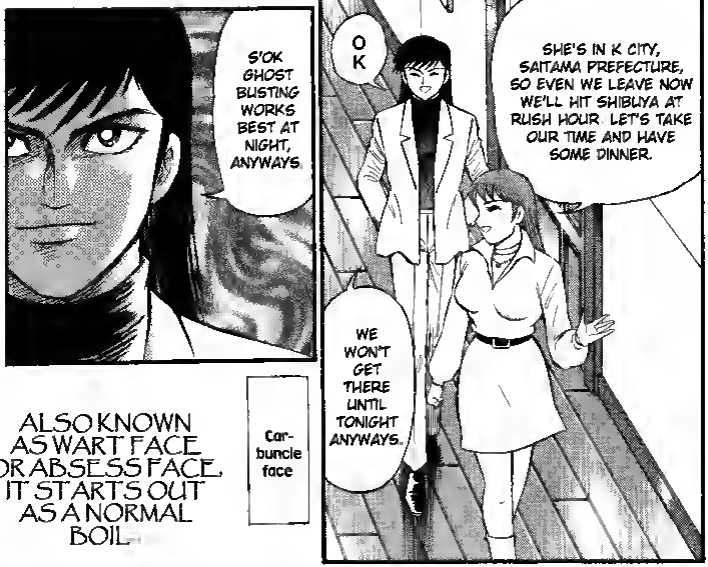
DOOR PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

AOI!
HEAVEN, INC PRESIDENT CHIKARA AMATSU.
SIT DOWN, SIT DOWN!
IT'S A REQUEST!
THE CHAIRMAN SENT IT DOWN
HAVE A LOOK!
GEEZ! WHAT DOES THAT OLD GEEZER WANT?

YOU RECOGNIZE THAT PHOTO?
THE REQUEST IS FROM THE OFFICE OF CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY MITAMURA
CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY MITAMURA!?

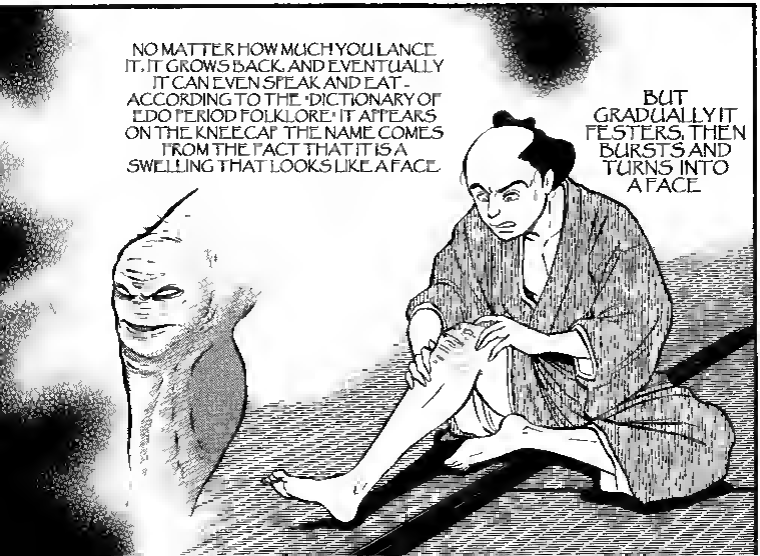
ONE OF HIS ACQUAINTANCES HAS A 20-ISH DAUGHTER WHO HAS GOTTEN A WEIRD DISEASE
A WEIRD DISEASE?

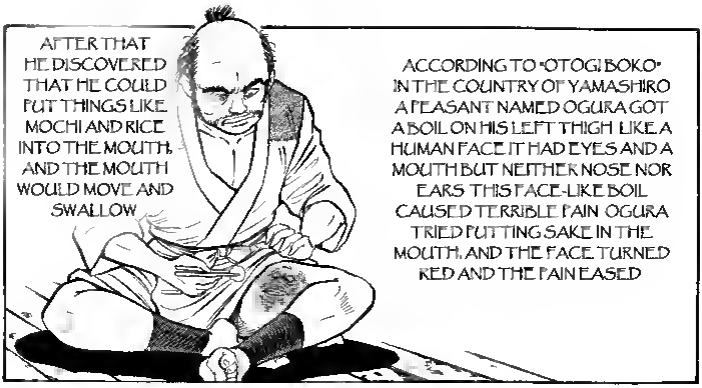
A WOMAN'S FACE HAS APPEARED ON HER STOMACH
CARB-UNCLE FACE!

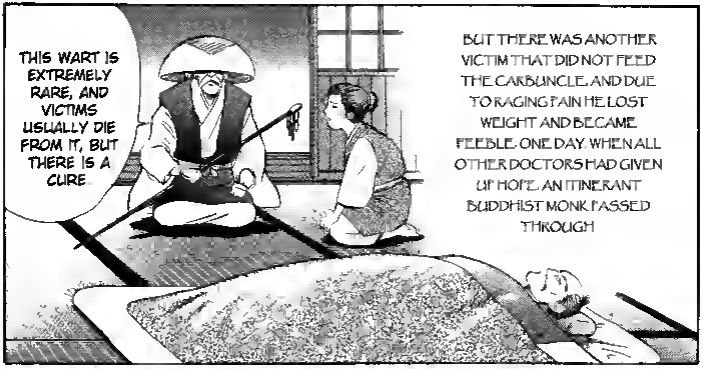

SHE'S IN K CITY, SAITAMA PREFECTURE, SO EVEN WE LEAVE NOW WE'LL HIT SHIBUYA AT RUSH HOUR. LET'S TAKE OUR TIME AND HAVE SOME DINNER.
OK
WE WON'T GET THERE UNTIL TONIGHT ANYWAYS.
S'OK GHOST BUSTING WORKS BEST AT NIGHT, ANYWAYS.

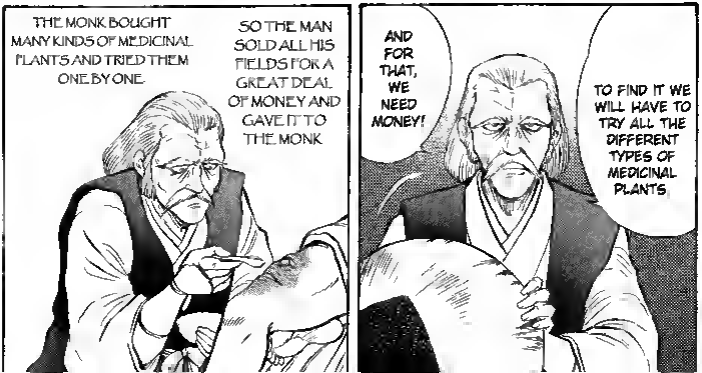
Car-buncle face

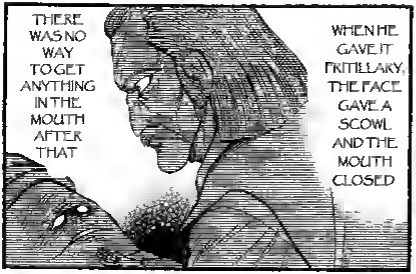
ALSO KNOWN AS WART FACE OR ABSESS FACE, IT STARTS OUT AS A NORMAL BOIL.

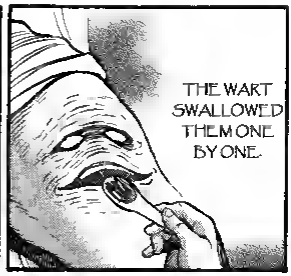

NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU LANCE IT, IT GROWS BACK. AND EVENTUALLY IT CAN EVEN SPEAK AND EAT. ACCORDING TO THE "DICTIONARY OF EDO PERIOD FOLKLORE" IT APPEARS ON THE KNEECAP. THE NAME COMES FROM THE FACT THAT IT IS A SWELLING THAT LOOKS LIKE A FACE.
BUT GRADUALLY IT FESTERS, THEN BURSTS AND TURNS INTO A FACE.


AFTER THAT HE DISCOVERED THAT HE COULD PUT THINGS LIKE MOCHI AND RICE INTO THE MOUTH, AND THE MOUTH WOULD MOVE AND SWALLOW
ACCORDING TO "OTOGI BOKO" IN THE COUNTRY OF YAMASHIRO A PEASANT NAMED OGURA GOT A BOIL ON HIS LEFT THIGH LIKE A HUMAN FACE. IT HAD EYES AND A MOUTH BUT NEITHER NOSE NOR EARS. THIS FACE-LIKE BOIL CAUSED TERRIBLE PAIN. OGURA TRIED PUTTING SAKE IN THE MOUTH, AND THE FACE TURNED RED AND THE PAIN EASED

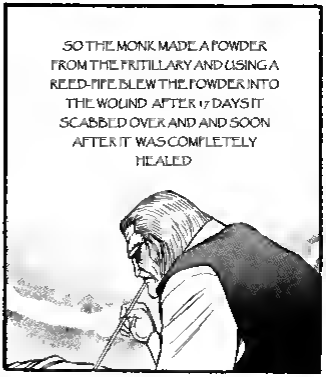

THIS WART IS EXTREMELY RARE, AND VICTIMS USUALLY DIE FROM IT, BUT THERE IS A CURE.
BUT THERE WAS ANOTHER VICTIM THAT DID NOT FEED THE CARBUNCLE, AND DUE TO RAGING PAIN HE LOST WEIGHT AND BECAME FEEBLE. ONE DAY, WHEN ALL OTHER DOCTORS HAD GIVEN UP HOPE, AN ITINERANT BUDDHIST MONK PASSED THROUGH

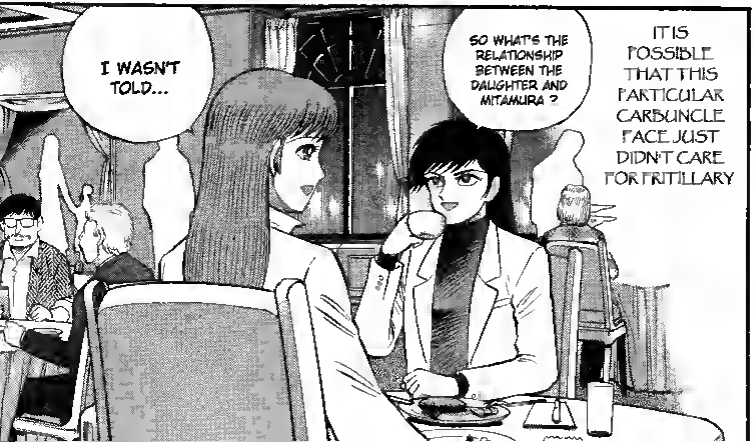

THE MONK BOUGHT MANY KINDS OF MEDICINAL PLANTS AND TRIED THEM ONE BY ONE.
SO THE MAN SOLD ALL HIS FIELDS FOR A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY AND GAVE IT TO THE MONK.
AND FOR THAT, WE NEED MONEY!
TO FIND IT WE WILL HAVE TO TRY ALL THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF MEDICINAL PLANTS.


THERE WAS NO WAY TO GET ANYTHING IN THE MOUTH AFTER THAT
WHEN HE GAVE IT FRITILLARY, THE FACE GAVE A SCOWL AND THE MOUTH CLOSED

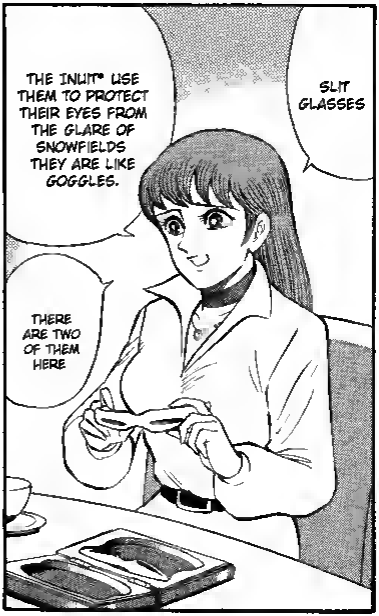


FRITILLARY IS ALSO CALLED "BRAIDED LILLY." IT IS A PERENNIAL AND BY DRYING THE BULB IN THE SHADE, BOILING IT DOWN AND GRINDING IT TO A POWDER IT CAN BE USED AS A MEDICINE. BUT USING FRITILLARY EFFECTIVELY AGAINST CARBUNCLE FACE IS HARDLY RECORDED ANYWHERE ELSE EXCEPT THIS ONE PARTICULAR STORY


SO THE MONK MADE A POWDER FROM THE FRITILLARY AND USING A REED-PIPE BLEW THE POWDER INTO THE WOUND. AFTER 17 DAYS IT SCABBED OVER AND AND SOON AFTER IT WAS COMPLETELY HEALED


I WASN'T TOLD...
SO WHAT'S THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DAUGHTER AND MITAMURA ?
IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS PARTICULAR CARBUNCLE FACE JUST DIDN'T CARE FOR FRITILLARY

IF MITAMURA HIMSELF IS INVOLVED IT WILL RUIN HIS IMAGE.
HM.
CARB-UNCLE FACE IS TOO STRANGE
THE GENERAL ELECTION IS CLOSE SO I DOUBT MITAMURA WANTS TO GET CAUGHT UP IN ANYTHING
SUPPOSEDLY THAT GIRL'S CARBUNCLE FACE EVEN HAS HAIR.
THE FACE OF A WOMAN THAT SOME GUY KILLED APPEARED ON HIM AS A CARBUNCLE FACE ...
HAIR? SOMETHING LIKE THAT HAPPENS IN THAT STORY "KAIRYOU ZAKKI" FROM THE EDO PERIOD, RIGHT?
UHM ... THE CHAIR-MAN
PRES-IDENT AMATSU, I'M GLAD I FOUND YOU
WHAT IS IT, KURAMA?
IT'S A PERFECT HORROR STORY... A GHOST STORY BRIMMING WITH JAPANESE-STYLE PASSIONS AND GRUDGES.
IT GIVES ME THE SHIVERS
NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES HE SHAVED IF OFF, THE FACE WOULD APPEAR WITH DISSHEVELED HAIR LAUGHING AT HIM...


SLIT GLASSES
THE INUIT* USE THEM TO PROTECT THEIR EYES FROM THE GLARE OF SNOWFIELDS THEY ARE LIKE GOGGLES.
THERE ARE TWO OF THEM HERE

*Indigenous people living in Alaska and Canada, related to the Mongols.

THE "DICTIONARY OF EDO PERIOD FOLKLORE" OFFERS SOME SAMPLE HAIKU ON THE TOPIC OF CARBUNCLE FACE:
"THE HOLE IN MY LAP/KEEPS MUNCHING AND MUNCHING ON/INSIDE OF MY PANTS."
"MY SO TIGHT KNICKERS/MAKE A SO FETCHING APRON/FOR CARBUNCLE FACE."
"THE DIRECTION OF PISS/CAUSES MUCH CONSTERNATION/-FOR THE CARBUNCLE FACE."
"THE CARBUNCLE FACE/IS NOT A MESSENGER WHO/EARNS HIS WAY WITH LEGS."
APPARENTLY IT WAS POPULAR AMONG THE COMMON FOLK OF THE EDO PERIOD TO LAUGH IT OFF.

I GUESS THIS IS THE HOUSE!

9:40PM. KAN-ETSU EX-PRESS-WAY.

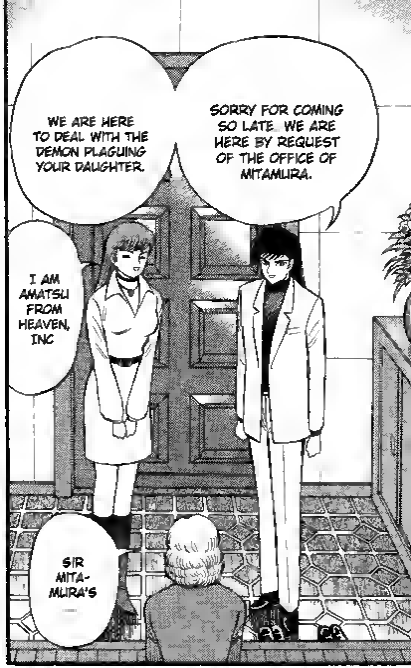
MOST SIGHTINGS OF IT THESE DAYS ARE FAKE, BUT PERHAPS NOT ALL. THERE ARE SO MANY INFECTIOUS DISEASES FROM OLDEN TIMES THAT HARDLY EXIST ANY LONGER TODAY.

THERE ARE PLENTY OF ACCOUNTS OF CARBUNCLE FACE IN THE WEST. IT IS NOT PARTICULAR TO JAPAN.

OF COURSE IT IS, ESPECIALLY SINCE IT HAS HAIR.

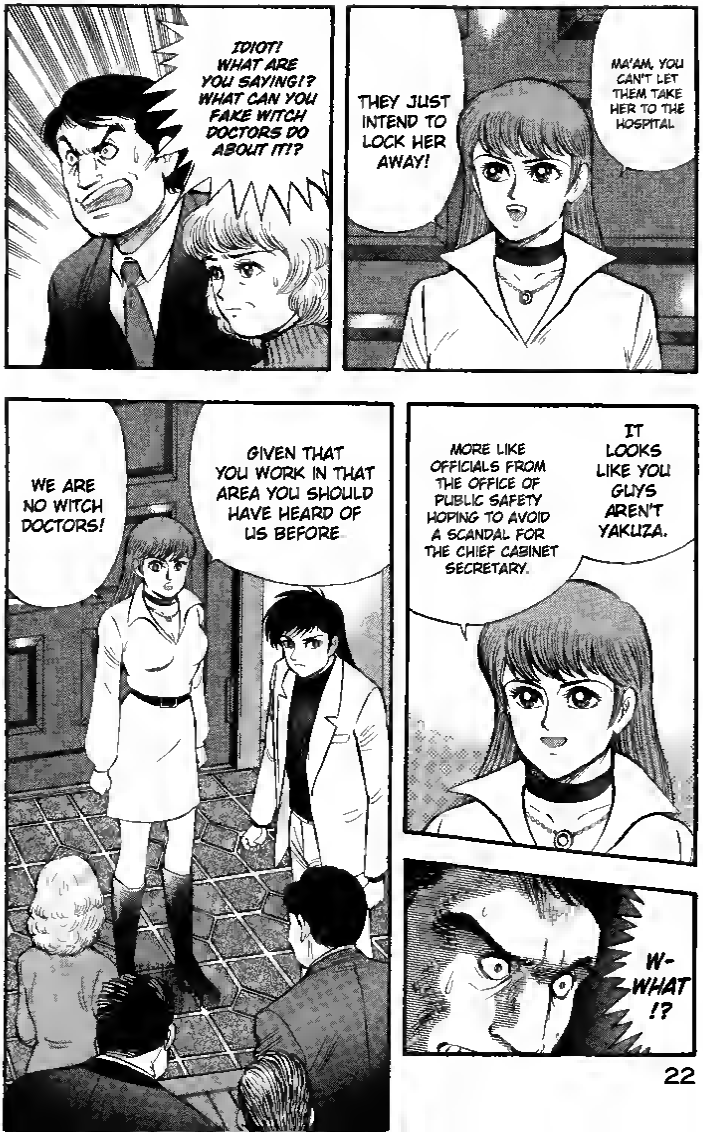
CARBUNCLE FACE IS DISGUSTING AND VILE...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? DEAL WITH THE DEMON!?


SORRY FOR COMING SO LATE. WE ARE HERE BY REQUEST OF THE OFFICE OF MITAMURA.
WE ARE HERE TO DEAL WITH THE DEMON PLAGUING YOUR DAUGHTER.
I AM AMATSU FROM HEAVEN, INC
SIR MITA-MURA'S

I HAVE NO IDEA HOW YOU FOUND OUT ABOUT IT, BUT I HAVE NO INTENTION OF LETTING SOME LETTING SOME CRAZY WITCH DOC-TORS CARE FOR MY DAUGHTER.
LEAVE!

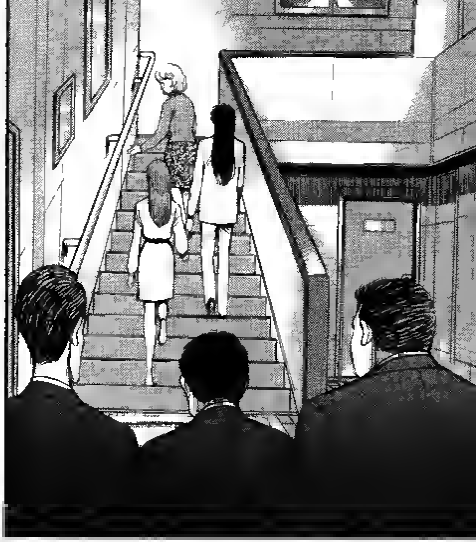
DON'T WORRY ABOUT HER!
YOU GUYS THINK YOU CAN HELP THE GIRL?
HUH! YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO HIDE THIS TO AVOID A SCANDAL
WE'VE JUST CONVINCED HER MOTHER TO LET US TAKE HER TO A HOSPITAL!
WE ARE TAKING ALL APPROPRIATE STEPS FOR SUCH A SERIOUS ILLNESS.
RIGHT, M'AM?
IDIOT! YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW THE NAME OF HER ILLNESS! DO YOU THINK IT IS AN ILLNESS THAT CONTEMPORARY MEDICINE KNOWS ANYTHING ABOUT!?


IDIOT! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING!? WHAT CAN YOU FAKE WITCH DOCTORS DO ABOUT IT!?
THEY JUST INTEND TO LOCK HER AWAY!
MA'AM, YOU CAN'T LET THEM TAKE HER TO THE HOSPITAL
WE ARE NO WITCH DOCTORS!
GIVEN THAT YOU WORK IN THAT AREA YOU SHOULD HAVE HEARD OF US BEFORE
MORE LIKE OFFICIALS FROM THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY HOPING TO AVOID A SCANDAL FOR THE CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY.
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU GUYS AREN'T YAKUZA.
W-WHAT!?

WE ARE HEAVEN'S HOUNDS!
!?
WHAT!?
MA'AM.
PLEASE SHOW US TO YOUR DAUGHTER.

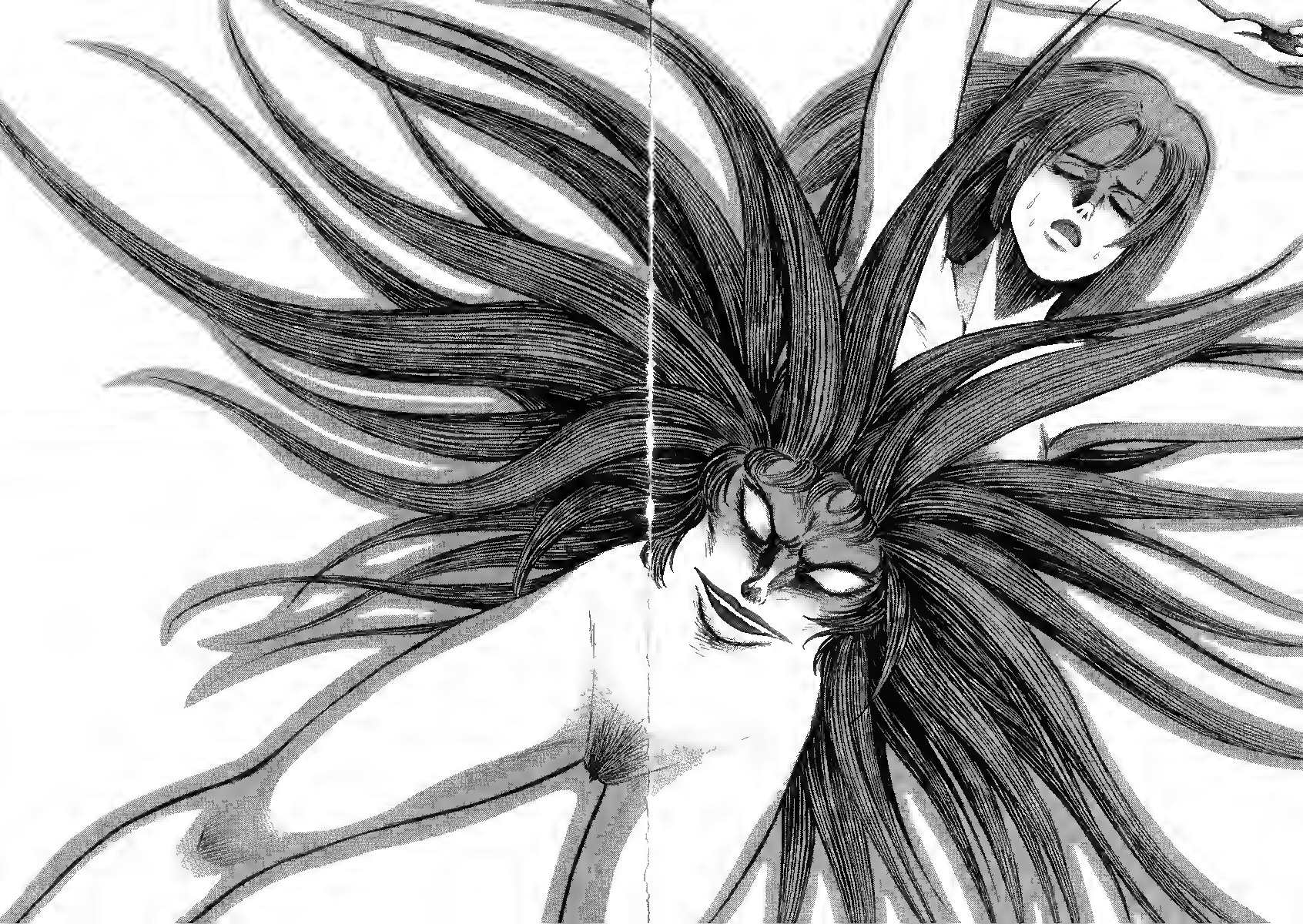
THEY ARE ...

HEAVEN'S HOUNDS!



IT'S MY DAUGHTER HITOMI PLEASE DO WHAT YOU CAN

PARDON ME, JUST NEED TO HAVE A LOOK.

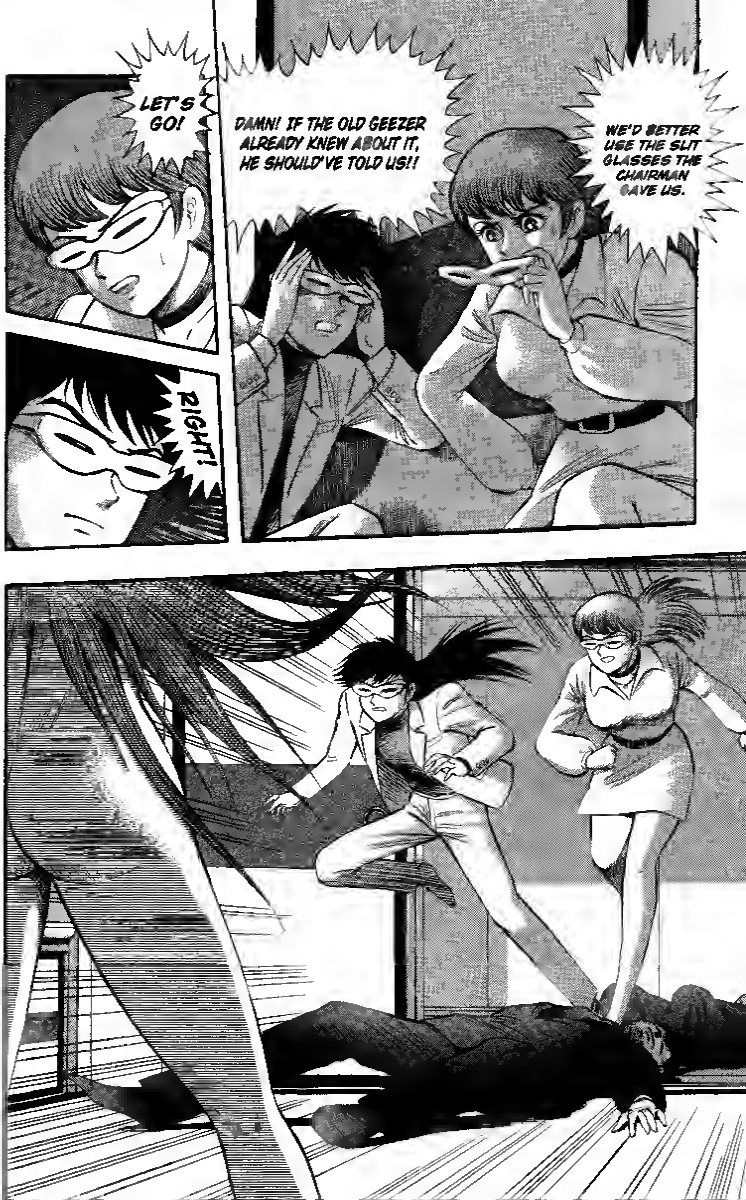


ウワァー
LOOK OUT, AOI! DON'T LOOK AT IT'S EYES!

KYAAAAH!
RUN! IT'S A MEDUSA!
ウワ
ガルガル

TURNED TO STONE?

IF THE MUSCLES STIFFEN BADLY ENOUGH, THEIR HEARTS COULD STOP!
THERE'S NO WAY THEY'VE ACTUALLY TURNED TO STONE. THE LIGHT FROM IT'S EYE-BALLS PARALYZED THEIR CRANIAL NERVES.


LET'S GO!
RIGHT!
DAMN! IF THE OLD GEEZER ALREADY KNEW ABOUT IT, HE SHOULD'VE TOLD US!!
WE'D BETTER USE THE SLIT GLASSES THE CHAIRMAN GAVE US.

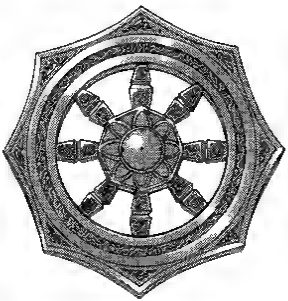
ウオオオオ
ウオ
RIGHT!
AOI!

Both "Chakraratna" and "Vajra Blades" are ritual implements of Mikkyou (esoteric Buddhism). They are used for putting up barriers, casting out evil, achieving enlightenment, and the like. Whether the implements carried by the pair known as Heaven's Hounds are the same is not known.

Vajra Blade

A Vajra with a cutting edge is also sometimes called a Vajra Knife

Chakraratna



There are various types of Chakraratna and Vajra Blades

ウオオオ

ヒカリ

ON BAZARA-YAKISH-IYALIN
CHIKARA, NOW!
ON SHUCHIRI KIYARAROHA UN KEN SOWAKA
SHADOW STITCH!

AOI! IT'S TIME TO DIVE!
OKAY! I'M GOING!
Om
ओं
Roopadyuta
रूपोद्द्योत
Swaha
स्वाहा
SURYAPRABHA! LEND ME YOUR STRENGTH!

HIDDEN PHOENIX: PENETRATION!

MADE IT! AOI'S ASTRAL PROJECTION IS INSIDE THE GIRL'S SOUL.
CAN YOU SEE, CHIKARA?
LOTS OF DARK VORTICES.
I CAN SEE IT, AOI. THE VORTEX OF THE EVIL THAT HAS POSSESSED HER.
HUH!?
BE CAREFUL, AOI, THERE'S SOMETHING BEHIND THE VORTEX!

HATE!
HATE!
HATE!
AOI. IT'S A VENGEFUL SPIRIT. THE MAGATSUHI LEND THEM THEIR POWER!!
MAGAT-SUHI!
REALLY? MAGA-TSUHI?
FROM THIS... VENGEFUL SPIRIT?

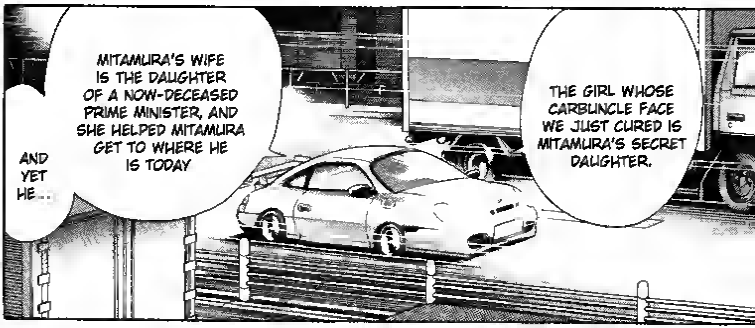
IT'S MITAMURA'S WIFE, FROM THE PHOTO WE SAW, ISN'T IT!?
AOI! DISPEL THIS VENGEFUL SPIRIT!
IF YOU DISPEL THE VENGEFUL SPIRIT, THE MAGATSUHI WILL DEPART AS WELL.
AOI! THE PURI-FYING FIRE!
RIN!
KYU!
TOH!
SHA!

ZEN!
ZAI!
RETSU!
JIN!
KAI!
POWER OF THE PHOENIX, BE GONE!

SOMEHOW DISPELLING THAT VENGEFUL SPIRIT WORE ME OUT.
YEP.
AOI, YOU BACK?
!
THE MAGATSUHI HAVE LEFT.
LOOK! RIGHT AWAY HER BODY WENT BACK TO NORMAL.
IT'S POSSIBLE SHE WON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING
BUT I EXPECT WE'LL BE SEEING THE MAGATSUHI AGAIN.

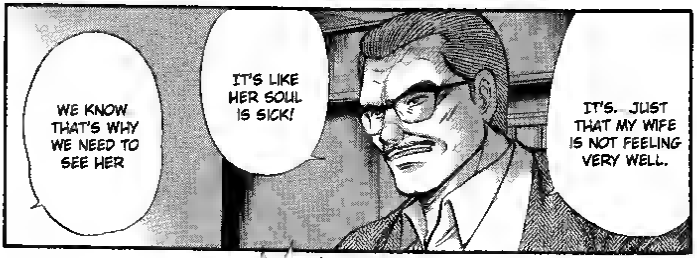
RIGHT. OUR LONG BATTLE HEATS UP AGAIN!
BUT FOR NOW WE NEED TO DEAL WITH THE FALLOUT FROM THIS VENGEFUL SPIRIT.
WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO SEE CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY MITAMURA.
ブロォ

WE WILL BE ABLE TO MEET WITH MITAMURA. THE CHAIRMAN FIXED IT.
HE SAYS HIS RESIDENCE WILL BE MORE CONVENIENT.
WHAT ABOUT THE FACT THAT THE VENGEFUL SPIRIT WAS MITAMURA'S WIFE?
HIS LEGAL WIFE HAD NO CHILDREN. THAT GIRL'S MOTHER WAS HIS LOVER


THE GIRL WHOSE CARBUNCLE FACE WE JUST CURED IS MITAMURA'S SECRET DAUGHTER.
MITAMURA'S WIFE IS THE DAUGHTER OF A NOW-DECEASED PRIME MINISTER, AND SHE HELPED MITAMURA GET TO WHERE HE IS TODAY
AND YET HE...

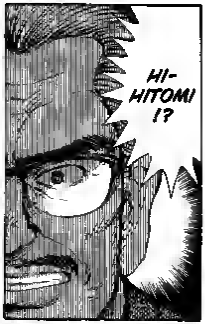
SIGN: MITAMURA

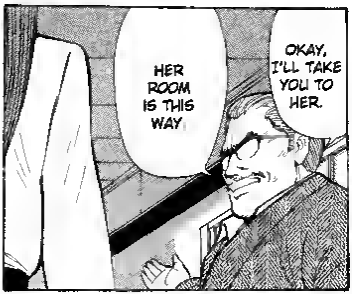
Y- YOU GUYS ARE HEAVEN'S HOUNDS!?
YES. I AM THE PRESIDENT OF HEAVEN, INC., CHIKARA AMATSU.
AND I'M AOI KATSURAGI.
CHIEF CABINET MINISTER, MAY WE SPEAK WITH YOUR WIFE PLEASE?

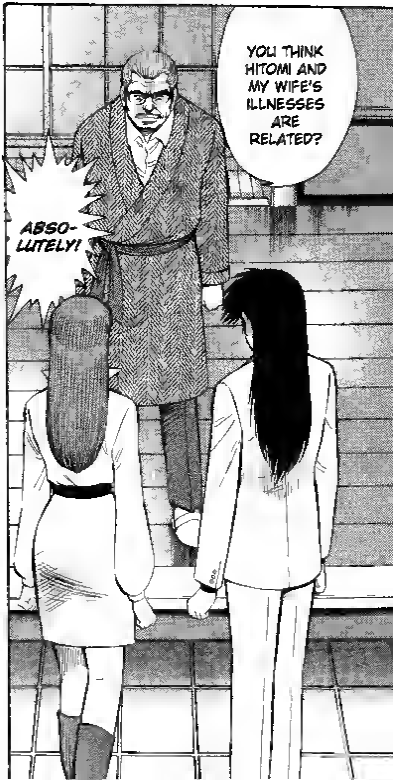

IT'S. JUST THAT MY WIFE IS NOT FEELING VERY WELL.
IT'S LIKE HER SOUL IS SICK!
WE KNOW THAT'S WHY WE NEED TO SEE HER

WE THINK YOUR WIFE WAS THE CAUSE OF YOUR DAUGHTER HITOMI'S ILLNESS
IT'S A RACE AGAINST TIME!

WE THINK THAT MRS MITAMURA MAY HAVE FOUND OUT ABOUT YOUR SECRET DAUGHTER, HITOMI
DID YOUR WIFE'S ILLNESS START AT THAT TIME?
THAT'S RIGHT, BUT...


HI-HITOMI!?


OKAY, I'LL TAKE YOU TO HER.
HER ROOM IS THIS WAY.

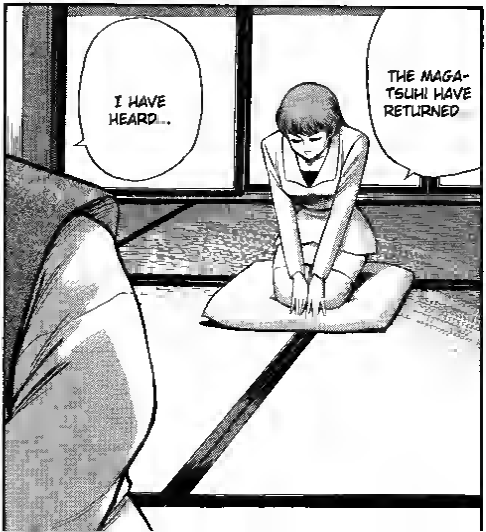

YOU THINK HITOMI AND MY WIFE'S ILLNESSES ARE RELATED?
ABSO-LUTELY!

BE WARNED YOU MAY FIND HER CONDITION DISTURBING.
IT'S OK. WE'LL BE FINE

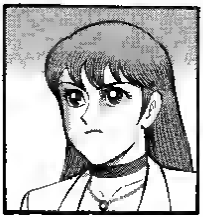
MISAKO!
ガラッ
MIS-
AKO?
MISAKO,
YOU HAVE
A GUEST.
WHAT
HAPPENED,
MISAKO!?
MIS-
AKO!
UWAAAAAH!

SHE HAS NO FACE!
SHE'S DEAD?
THE CONSEQUENCES OF CASTING A CURSE.
HER FACE MUST HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY THE MAGATSUHI.
AH AHHH

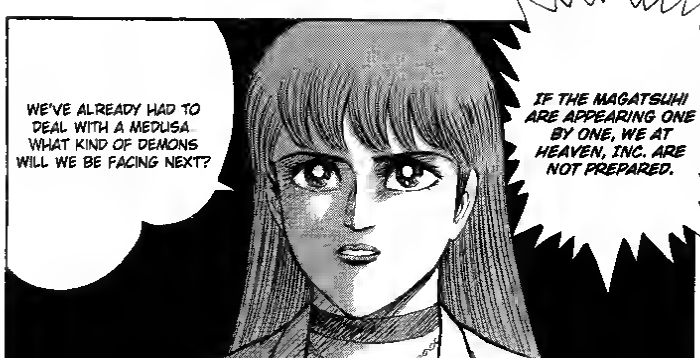
TSK!
RIGHT BEFORE THE ELECTION, TOO!
THE CHIEF CABINET MINISTER'S WIFE SUDDENLY DIED...
THE CAUSE OF DEATH WAS CEREBRAL HEMORRHAGE
THE NEWSWEEKLY IS RUNNING THE RUMOR ABOUT MITAMURA'S SECRET CHILD ON THE HEADLINE
YOU THINK HIS WIFE DIED OF SHOCK?
EH? IF SO, TOO BAD FOR HIM!
MITAMURA'S DISTRICT IS HIS WIFE'S HOMETOWN. THAT COULD MAKE IT A TOUGH ELECTION!

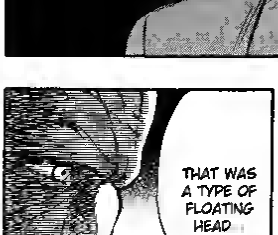


SIGN OZUNU

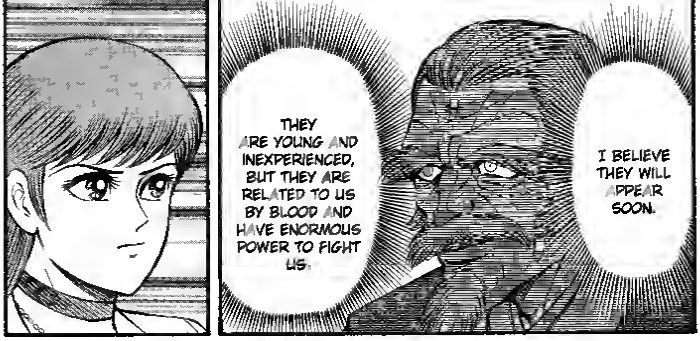


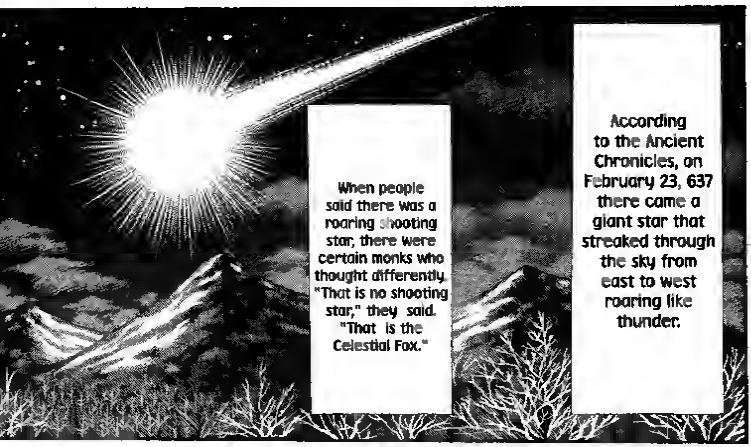
THE ERA OF DEMONS IS COMING!
TROUBLES ARE GATHERING FOR HUMAN SOCIETY. ONE BY ONE THE SEALS AGAINST THE MAGATSUHI ARE BEING BROKEN
RIGHT.
I AM SURE I DO NOT KNOW...
BUT WHO DO WE REPLACE HIM WITH?
IF WE ARE GOING TO FIND A WAY TO DEFEAT THE MAGATSUHI, MITAMURA IS NOT THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY.
THAT ASIDE ABOUT THIS INCIDENT...

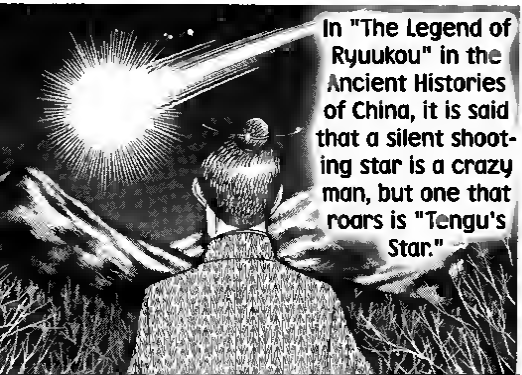

WE'VE ALREADY HAD TO DEAL WITH A MEDUSA. WHAT KIND OF DEMONS WILL WE BE FACING NEXT?
IF THE MAGATSUHI ARE APPEARING ONE BY ONE, WE AT HEAVEN, INC. ARE NOT PREPARED.



"FLOATING HEADS" ARE THE DISEMBODIED HEADS OF WOMEN WITH PITCH-BLACK TEETH. THE LONG HAIR SWEEPS DOWN IN LONG WILLOWY TRESSES SO THAT IT IS HARD TO TELL IF IT IS JUST A HEAD OR NOT. THERE IS AN ANCIENT SONG ABOUT "FLOATING HEADS" FOUND IN OLD BOOKS. OFTEN ENORMOUS, THEY APPEAR IN STARLIGHT BREAKING THROUGH ON A RAINY NIGHT, TEETH STAINED PITCH BLACK. TERRIFYING VISIONS OF WOMEN'S HEADS.


THEY ARE YOUNG AND INEXPERIENCED, BUT THEY ARE RELATED TO US BY BLOOD AND HAVE ENORMOUS POWER TO FIGHT US.
I BELIEVE THEY WILL APPEAR SOON.


When people said there was a roaring shooting star, there were certain monks who thought differently. "That is no shooting star," they said. "That is the Celestial Fox."
According to the Ancient Chronicles, on February 23, 637 there came a giant star that streaked through the sky from east to west roaring like thunder.


In "The Legend of Ryuukou" in the Ancient Histories of China, it is said that a silent shooting star is a crazy man, but one that roars is "Tengu's Star."

From time immemorial, China abounds with stories of hounds from heaven. Some examples are "Kansho Ongi," "Fuzuien," "Gozousho," "Kansho," among many others.

BUT SOME ANCIENT PEOPLE GUESSED THAT IT WAS NEITHER SHOOTING STAR NOR HOUND OF HEAVEN NOR CELESTIAL FOX IT WAS THE SPACE SHIP OF BEINGS FROM ANOTHER WORLD
IN LATER YEARS THESE RIDERS OF THE SPACE SHIP WERE CALLED "TENGU"

CHAPTER 1: USOBUKI

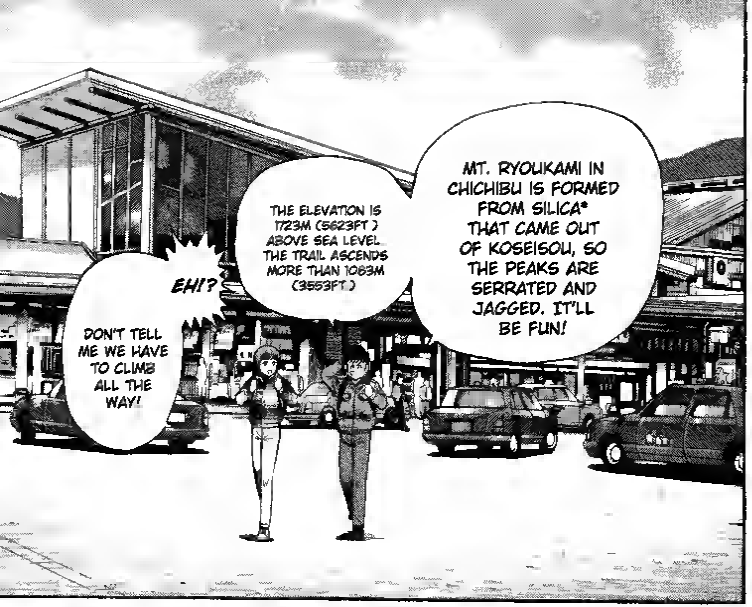
Oku-chichibu Mountains. The foot of Mt. Ryou-kami. The village of Hishizume. Hishizume Shrine.
THE CLIFF MIGHT CAVE IN.
THE EARTH-QUAKE JUST NOW CAUSED SOME GROUND MOVEMENT.
IT'S NOT STOPPING ...THE HEAVY RAIN.

THIS POOR VILLAGE HAS NO MONEY TO REPAIR A SHRINE.
I CAN'T BEAR THE THOUGHT THAT AN AVALANCHE WOULD HIT DIRECTLY ON THE MAIN SHRINE BUILDING....
BUT EVEN JUST A BOULDER WOULD BE A DISASTER
OH, NO!
WORRYING WON'T HELP ANY-THING.
OH, WELL.

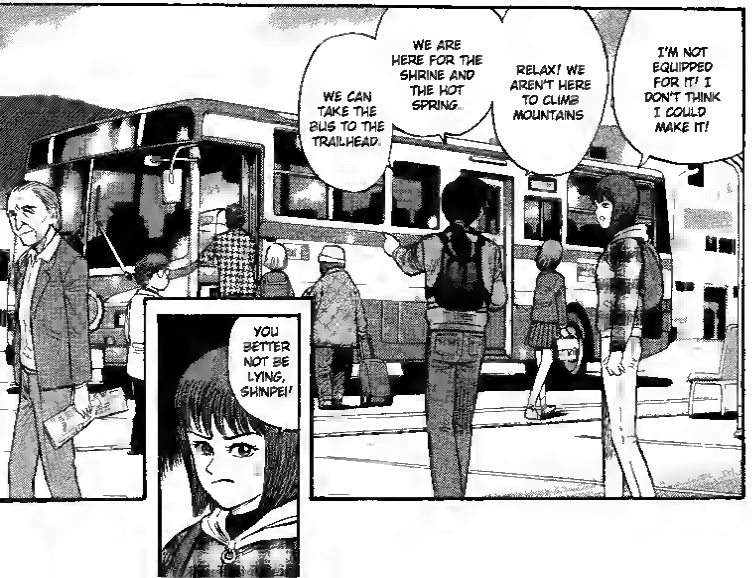
カッ
カッ
THE OLD HOKORA HAS BEEN SMASHED!
THE WALLS OF THE MAIN BUILDING HAVE COL-LAPSED!
THE WORST HAS HAPPENED!
AH!

EVEN THE STATUE OF VAISRAVANA TRAMPLING THE DEMON IS BROKEN!
ゴオオ
YOU EAT A LOT, SHINPEI
WHAT? THIS IS ONLY THE SECOND!
HEHE

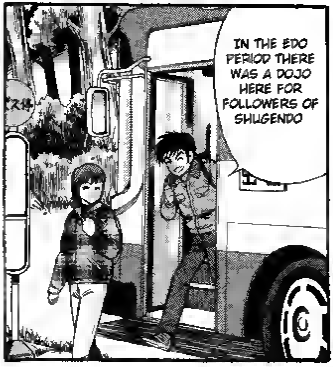
ガタンガタン
HAHA!
EVEN THE PLACES THAT NOBODY'S EVER HEARD OF!
YOU REALLY LOVE OLD SHRINES 'N STUFF DON'T YOU.
BEFORE WE GET TO THE HOT SPRING THERE IS A SHRINE I WANT TO CHECK OUT.
WE'RE FINALLY GETTING TO GO HIKING, SO I'VE GOTTA KEEP MY STAMINA UP.
IT'S AN ADVEN-TURE!
DISCOVERING THE BURIED CLUES AND FIGURING OUT WHAT THEY MEAN IS CRAZY FUN.
I JUST LOVE THE PLACES FORGOTTEN BY THE HISTORY BOOKS.
ガッガッ
PLACES WHOSE HISTORY HAS BEEN STUDIED TO DEATH ARE BORING—
I'M PAYING SO HUSH YOUR WHINING!
YOKO, ALL YOU CARE ABOUT IS THAT WHEREVER WE GO HAVE A HOT SPRING AND BOOZE, RIGHT?
AND YOU'RE TRYING TO FORCE ME INTO IT!
ゴトンゴトン


MT. RYOUKAMI IN CHICHIBU IS FORMED FROM SILICA* THAT CAME OUT OF KOSEISOU, SO THE PEAKS ARE SERRATED AND JAGGED. IT'LL BE FUN!
THE ELEVATION IS 1723M (5623FT.) ABOVE SEA LEVEL. THE TRAIL ASCENDS MORE THAN 1063M (3553FT.)
EH!?
DON'T TELL ME WE HAVE TO CLIMB ALL THE WAY!

*Rock laced with quartz


I'M NOT EQUIPPED FOR IT! I DON'T THINK I COULD MAKE IT!
RELAX! WE AREN'T HERE TO CLIMB MOUNTAINS
WE ARE HERE FOR THE SHRINE AND THE HOT SPRING.
WE CAN TAKE THE BUS TO THE TRAILHEAD.
YOU BETTER NOT BE LYING, SHINPEI!

ON THE EASTERN SIDE OF MT RYOUGAMI THERE'S A WELL-KNOWN SHRINE IN THE TOWN OF RYOUGAMI RYOUGAMI SHRINE
IT'S THE SHRINE WHERE THEY WORSHIP IZANAGI-NO-MIKOTO AND IZANAMI-NO-MIKOTO, RIGHT
THAT'S SUPPOSEDLY HOW MT RYOUGAMI GOT ITS NAME THE MOUNTAIN OF TWO GODS


IN THE EDO PERIOD THERE WAS A DOJO HERE FOR FOLLOWERS OF SHUGENDO

PRINCE YAMATO TAKERU SUPPOSEDLY SPENT 8 DAYS HERE, SO SOMETIMES IT IS CALLED THE MOUNTAIN OF 8 DAYS WATCH
UP ON THE MOUNTAIN THERE'S A SMALLER SHRINE CALLED DRAGON HEAD SHRINE, SO SOMETIMES THEY CALL IT DRAGON GOD MOUNTAIN

SHUGENDO WAS FOUNDED BY EN-NO-GYOUJA*, RIGHT?
UH HUH
IT'S SAID HE FOUNDED IT IN THE NARA PERIOD
* HISTORICAL FOUNDER OF THE SHUGENDO SECT OF ESOTERIC BUDDHISM

FACING SOUTH TOWARD THE NORTH RIM OF SUMMIT, THE RYOUGAMI SHRINE HAS A HOKORA IN THE BACK FOR WORSHIPING DAINICHI NYORAI AND TAISHAKUTEN.
LIKE MOUNTAIN WORSHIP, RIGHT? JAPAN HAS HAD THAT FROM THE START.
PERHAPS BECAUSE OUR ANCESTORS FELT A SENSE OF MYSTERY IN THE MOUNTAINS.

SHINPEI, WHAT EXACTLY IS THE SHRINE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR?
HISHIZUME SHRINE INTENDED TO APPEASE FIRE, THAT IS TO WORSHIP THE GODS WHO PREVENT FIRES.

MAYBE IT WAS BECAUSE IN THOSE DAYS THE MOUNTAINS HID SOMETHING STRANGE THAT COULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS GODS
OH----I SEE SOMETHING STRANGE. COULD SUCH A SIMPLE-MINDED EXPLANATION BE RIGHT.....?

IT'S IN THE VILLAGE OF HISHIZUME, WHERE WE'RE STAYING.
AND THERE'S A HOTSPRINGS THERE!

AH! IN OTHER WORDS ...
OF COURSE! AND THERE IS A GREAT OUTDOOR BATH—BUT IT'S COED!

IS THE FOOD GOOD?
WOAH!
IT'S A HIDDEN HOT SPRING KNOWN ONLY TO THE ENLIGHTENED. THERE'S JUST ONE TINY INN THERE WHERE YOU CAN STAY, BUT THAT'S ENOUGH!

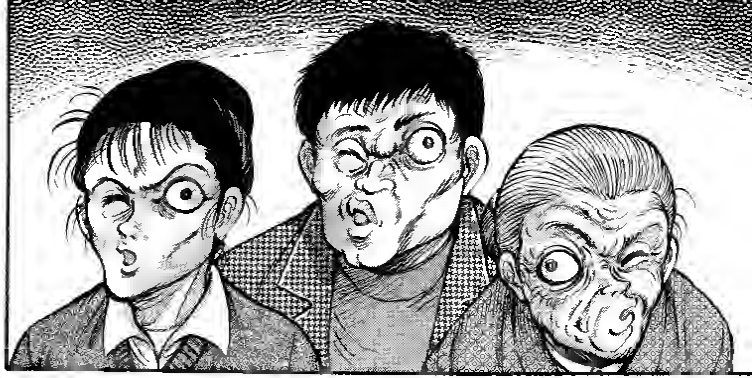
NO WAY. I WILL NOT BE GOING IN WITH YOU!
THAT WAS YOUR REASON FOR INVITING ME HERE, RIGHT?

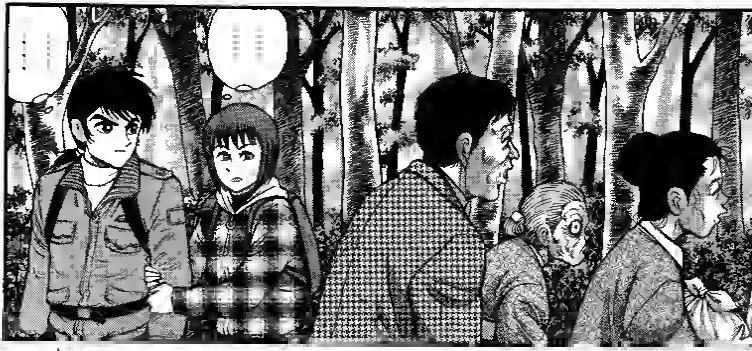
NO WAY!
IF THAT'S THE CASE, LET ME SEE 'EM!

HMM
AH, SOMEONE'S COMING—
SOMEONE FROM THE VILLAGE?

HEY, ABSOLUTELY NOT! WHO WOULD WANT TO SOAK WITH SOME CHILDHOOD FRIEND—
AND YOU'RE FLAT AS A BOARD! WHO WANTS TO SEE THAT!?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, I'M FLAT!? I JUST LOOK THIN IN THESE CLOTHES!

EWW. THAT GUY LOOKED REALLY WEIRD
MAYBE HE HAS A BAD EYE.
HIS FACE WAS ALL TWISTED, TOO
KINDA GROSS
HE DIDN'T REALLY LOOK DANG-EROUS.
IT COULD BE HE WAS BORN THAT WAY
IF NOT THAT, MAYBE IT'S FROM AN ACCIDENT ...
IT DOESN'T MEAN HE'S A BAD GUY.
TRUE.

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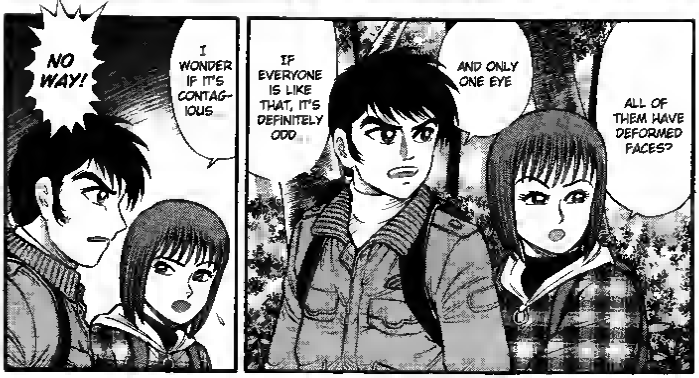
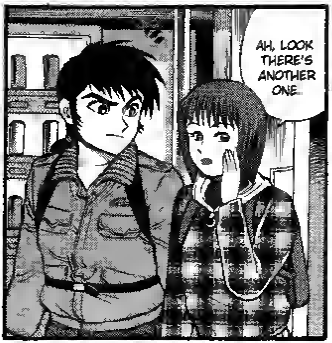
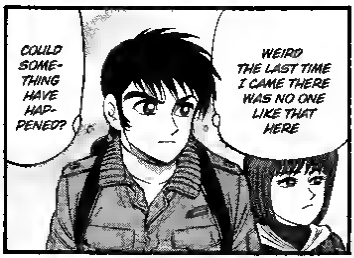

ALL OF THEM HAVE DEFORMED FACES?
AND ONLY ONE EYE
IF EVERYONE IS LIKE THAT, IT'S DEFINITELY ODD
I WONDER IF IT'S CONTAG-IOUS
NO WAY!

OOF FINALLY
THERE'S THE VILLAGE OF HISHIZUME
I NEVER HEARD OF ANY SUCH DISEASE!
SURE DOES HAVE THAT OLD JAPANESE FLAVOR, DOESN'T IT?

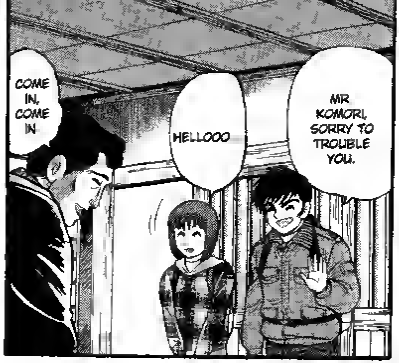
NOT LIKE LAST TIME
. . . THE PEOPLE AREN'T FRIENDLY

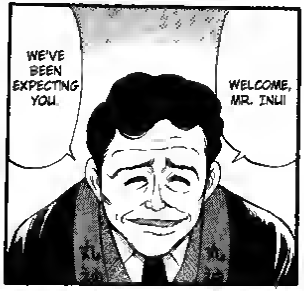

AH, LOOK THERE'S ANOTHER ONE

YES?
EXCUSE ME?


COULD SOME-THING HAVE HAP-PENED?
WEIRD THE LAST TIME I CAME THERE WAS NO ONE LIKE THAT HERE

WHERE ARE YOU TWO FROM?
AND WHY ARE YOU HERE?
UMMM... TOKYO
WE'RE TOURISTS
WE'RE PLANNING TO STAY AT MARUGAMI INN
MARUGAMI INN? HMM..
OFFICER, HAS SOMETHING HAPPENED?
AH, NO IT'S NOTHING
WHAT!? EVEN THE POLICEMAN IS WEIRD!
SOMETHING MUST'VE HAPPENED.. HE'S CHECKING OUT STRANGERS
HERE'S MARUGAMI INN.
IT'S AN OLD JAPANESE-STYLE HOUSE THAT'S BEEN RENOVATED
COULD BE QUITE NICE..


COME IN, COME IN
HELLOOO
MR KOMORI, SORRY TO TROUBLE YOU.


WE'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU.
WELCOME, MR. INUI

IT'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT
I ACCIDENTALLY POKED MY EYE WITH A TWIG WHILE WORKING IN THE GARDEN

IT'S, WELL...
THIS?
HUH? MR. KOMORI, IS SOMETHING THE MATTER WITH YOUR EYE?

WELCOME, MR. INUI.
THANK YOU.
.....
PLEASE, MY DAUGHTER WILL SHOW YOU AROUND.

THE DAUGHTER IS CUTE I LIKE HER.
YEAH AND THE VIEW IS GREAT
I THINK THE DAUGHTER IS CALLED YUI SHE'S IN HIGH SCHOOL
SHE MUST BE HELPING OUT DURING BREAK.

BUT WHEN HE LAUGHS, ONE SIDE DISTORTS A LITTLE.
ISN'T IT GRADUALLY BECOMING...
LIKE THE OTHERS?

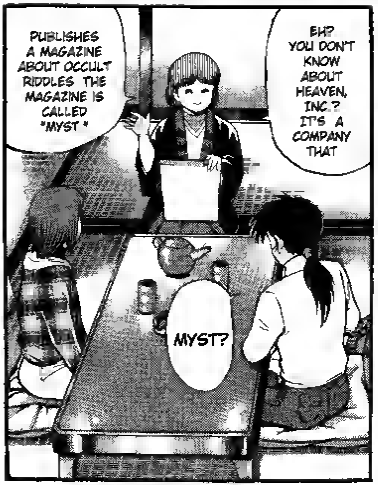
BUT THE OWNER'S EYE

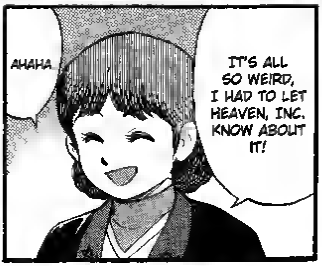
HE SAID IT WAS A TWIG.
THAT'S DIFFERENT, ISN'T IT?

THE ROOM IS CHEAPER THIS WAY, NOTHING MORE!
YOU DIDN'T MENTION THAT LITTLE DETAIL!
BUT BESIDES THAT, WHY ARE WE IN THE SAME ROOM?
IF YOU WANT TO DO THAT, YOU NEED TO TAKE PROPER RESPONSIBILITY
YOUR PARENTS AND MINE STICK TOGETHER LIKE GLUE
IF YOU SO MUCH AS TRY TOUCHING ME, I WON'T FORGIVE IT!
DON'T COME CRAWLING OVER IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. I WON'T ACCEPT IT!
I'M TELLING YOU I HAVE NO INTENTION OF IT. WE'VE BEEN TOGETHER SO LONG WE PEED TOGETHER IN KINDERGARTEN.
WHO WOULD EVER....DO ....TO YOU...
D- D- DON'T TALK NONSENSE!
EXCUSE ME!?
IT WAS SUCH A MISTAKE LETTING YOU BRING ME OUT HERE!
AH.
AREN'T WE MORE LIKE BROTHER AND SISTER!?

YOUR TEA IS READY.
OH, THANK YOU
OH, YUI, THERE'S SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU
HAS THERE BEEN SOME KIND OF TROUBLE AROUND HERE?
I'VE NEVER SEEN A POLICEMAN IN THIS VILLAGE BEFORE
THERE'S ALWAYS BEEN A POLICE BOX HERE.
BUT IT'S TRUE THAT WE MAY HAVE STARTED TO SEE SOME TROUBLE IN THE VILLAGE
SOMETHING DID HAPPEN, DIDN'T IT?
WHAT EXACTLY?
THERE HAS BEEN A NUMBER OF PEOPLE BEING KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS.
IT REALY IS QUITE STRANGE.
神

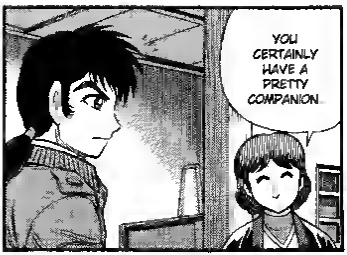
FURTHERMORE, THEIR MEMORIES ARE A BIT FUZZY. THEY FEEL IT MUST HAVE BEEN SOMEONE WHO ATTACKED THEM, BUT THEY HAVE NO IDEA WHO IT WAS.
THEY ARE ONLY KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS. NOTHING IS STOLEN, AND THERE ARE NO INJURIES.

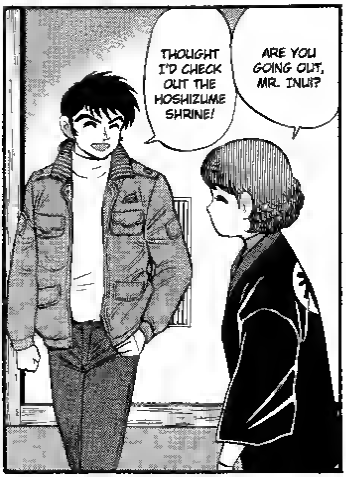

PUBLISHES A MAGAZINE ABOUT OCCULT RIDDLES THE MAGAZINE IS CALLED "MYST."
EH? YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT HEAVEN, INC.? IT'S A COMPANY THAT
MYST?


AHAHA
IT'S ALL SO WEIRD, I HAD TO LET HEAVEN, INC. KNOW ABOUT IT!

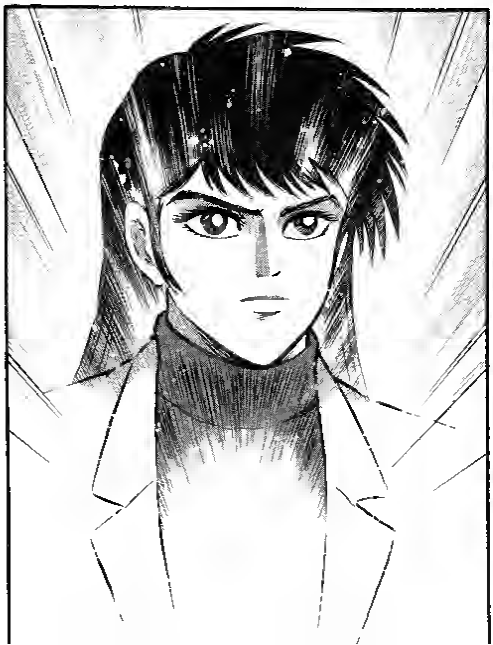
WHAT IS THAT?
HEAVEN, INC?

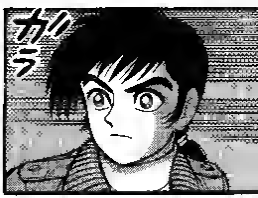
OKAY WE'VE STILL GOT TIME, SO LET'S GO TO THE SHRINE
HUH? NO WAY!
I'M A SUBSCRIBER, SO I SENT THEM AN EMAIL ABOUT IT.
THEY GIVE YOU PRIZES FOR INTERESTING INFO. .
I SEE
PLEASE ENJOY YOURSELVES
I'M TIRED FROM WALKING. WHY DON'T YOU GO BY YOURSELF? SEEING AS HOW YOU'RE SO EAGER.
SHE TOLD US TO ENJOY OURSELVES
I'M GONNA TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OUTDOOR BATH WHILE YOU'RE GONE
ALRIGHTY!
I'M GONNA CHECK OUT THE SHRINE!


YOU CERTAINLY HAVE A PRETTY COMPANION.


ARE YOU GOING OUT, MR. INUI?
I THOUGHT I'D CHECK OUT THE HOSHIZUME SHRINE!

HER? NAH, SHE'S JUST A CHILDHOOD FRIEND!
YOU'RE WAY CUTER!

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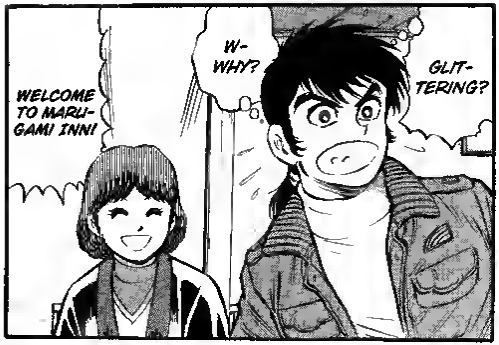
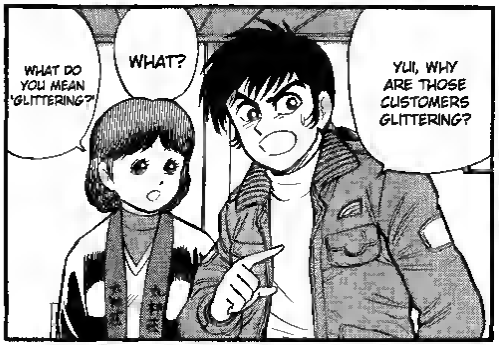

WELCOME TO MARUGAMI INN!
W-WHY?
GLITTERING?

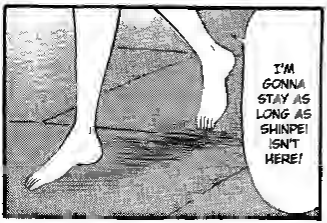

WHAT DO YOU MEAN 'GLITTERING?'
WHAT?
YUI, WHY ARE THOSE CUSTOMERS GLITTERING?

?
WHAT? YOU MEAN ONLY I CAN SEE IT?

WELCOME! THANK YOU FOR COMING!

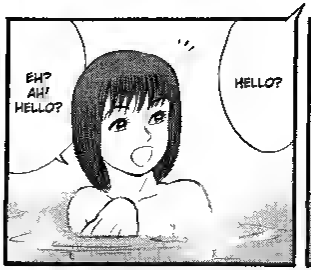
ドキン
NO, THAT'S OKAY IT'S SPECIAL EQUIPMENT FOR OUR WORK
PLEASE, THIS WAY
MAY I TAKE YOUR LUGGAGE?
I WONDER IF THEY'RE MODELS!
WOW! BOTH THOSE GUYS ARE SO HUNKY!
AND THAT GLITTER-ING...
WHAT? THERE'S A SUDDEN TWINGE IN MY CHEST!

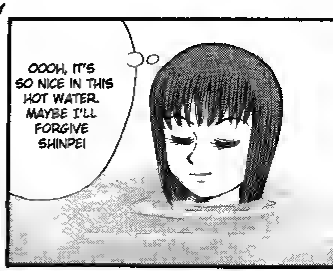
WHOAH! IT'S HUGE!
THE ONE INSIDE IS PUNY, BUT THE OUTDOOR ONE IS REALLY BIG!


I'M GONNA STAY AS LONG AS SHINPEI ISN'T HERE!

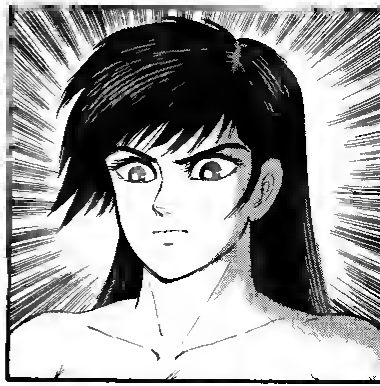
IT'S A WEEKDAY SO IT SEEMS LIKE I'LL HAVE IT TO MYSELF.
EVEN IF IT'S MIXED BATHING

MAYBE A MODEL?
TALL... FANTASTIC FIGURE... WHO COULD SHE BE?
FOR SOME REASON SHE LOOKS LIKE A GUY... MAYBE BECAUSE SHE'S SO WELL-BUILT? EVEN WITHOUT MAKEUP SHE'S SO PRETTY!


EH? AH! HELLO?
HELLO?


OOOH, IT'S SO NICE IN THIS HOT WATER. MAYBE I'LL FORGIVE SHINPEI

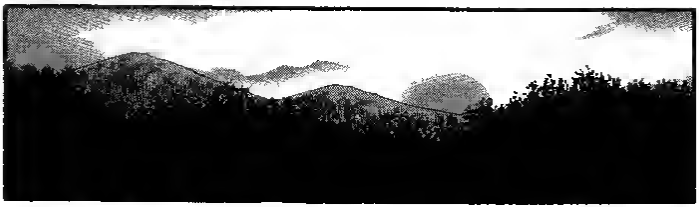
WHAT A PRETTY GUY! A REAL HUNK!
IT'S A GUY! WHAT DO I DO? IT'S MIXED BATHING!



A WOMAN WHAT A RELIEF! I WAS GETTING TENSE
IT'S A WOMAN!?

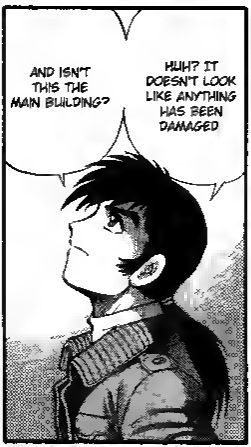
IT SEEMS PRETTY OLD I WONDER WHAT THE SHINTAI IS LIKE
SINCE "HISHIZUME" MEANS "SUPPRESSING FIRE" THEY MUST WORSHIP A GOD THAT SAVES PEOPLE FROM FIRES
OH, HERE IT IS
I'M A TRAVELER, AND I JUST LOVE OLD SHRINES
I MEAN, YES, MA'AM
YEAH.
EXCUSE ME, ARE YOU HERE TO PAY RESPECTS?
DANG. VISITING HERE WAS THE REASON I CAME.
AS A RESULT, PART OF THE BUILDING WAS DESTROYED, AND WE AREN'T ALLOWING VISITORS
ACTUALLY, THERE WAS A LANDSLIDE
OH, REALLY?

I SEE...
I GUESS IT CAN'T BE HELPED.
UNFORTUNATELY, HE'S LAID OUT SICK.
IN THAT CASE IT WOULD BE NICE IF YOU COULD AT LEAST TALK WITH THE CHIEF PRIEST
HER FACE IS ALL TWISTED, TOO.
I THINK I'M GONNA HAVE TO SNOOP AROUND A BIT!
SO THEY WON'T ACCEPT VISITORS JUST BECAUSE THE BUILDING IS A LITTLE DAMAGED?
IT'S SO WEIRD!



OOF!

I CAN SNEAK IN FROM THE BACK
LESSE


AND ISN'T THIS THE MAIN BUILDING?
HUH? IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE ANYTHING WAS BEEN DAMAGED

EVIDENCE OF THE AVALANCHE.
AH. HERE?
!?
IT'S AN OLD HOKORA THAT WAS SMASHED
LOOKS LIKE A STATUE OF VAISRA-VANA
HUH!?
DESPITE THIS DAMAGE IT ALMOST SEEMS UNSCATHED...
THERE'S AN IDOL PROTRUDING FROM THE HOKORA.

WHAT EXACTLY IS THIS!?
VAISRAVANA SHOULD BE TRAMPLING AN AMANOJAKU, BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT THIS IS.
WHA!?
AH!
I'M SO SORRY. I ACCIDENTALLY SET OFF THE FLASH
FROM THE MARUGAMI INN!
YOU'RE THE GUY FROM BEFORE.

IS IT OKAY IF WE PUBLISH IT IN THE MAGAZINE?
EH?
MIND IF I USE THIS PHOTO?
WASN'T THIS GUY GLITTERING BACK AT THE INN?
DOES HE HAVE AN AURA?
YOUR FACE ISN'T IN IT
MAGAZINE?
BUT IF A PERSON IS IN IT, THEN PEOPLE CAN TELL HOW BIG THE STATUE IS
I'D REALLY APPRECIATE IT.
MYST!? SO YOU'RE FROM THE MAGAZINE YUI MESSAGED!?
ABOUT ALL OF THOSE PEOPLE GETTING KNOCKED OUT!?
YUI KOMORI? SHE'S THE ONE WHO GAVE US THE TIP. THE DAUGHTER OF THE OWNER OF MARUGAMI INN, RIGHT?
I'M DOING A STORY FOR A MAGAZINE CALLED "MYST."
OH, I HAVEN'T INTRODUCED MYSELF. I'M REI HAGURO I'M A FREELANCE PHOTOGRAPHER.

OLD HOKORA LIKE THESE ARE OFTEN SEALS AGAINST EVIL SPIRITS.
THIS STATUE?
!?
I THINK THIS BROKEN STATUE MAY BE THE KEY TO THE TROUBLES.
MORE LIKE EVIL SPIRIT IT'S CALLED "USOBUKI."
A DEMON SEAL!? YOU MEAN THIS WEIRD DEMON THAT VAISRAVANA IS TREADING ON?
"HYOTOKKO!"
IT'S COMMONLY KNOWN AS...
SOMETIMES IT'S CALLED "HIBUKI" (FIRE-BREATHER) OR "MIZUUMIBUKI" (LAKE-SPEWER)
USO-BUKI!?

*Now part of Miyagi and Iwate Prefectures
THE MEN WHO STARTED AND CONTROLLED FIRES WOULD SOMETIMES LOSE THEIR SKILL AND END UP AS HYOTTOKO IN SOME AREAS THEY WERE GODS OF THE HEARTH. IN THE OLD PROVINCE OF RIKUZEN* FOR EXAMPLE, THEY HUNG THEM OVER THE FIREPLACE FOR GOOD LUCK.
THE CLOWN MASK IN KAGURA DANCES
HYO. HYOT-TOKO?
NO, WAIT. I'VE HEARD THAT HYOTTOKO ARE THE GODS OF BLACKSMITHING.
THIS GUY SURE KNOWS A LOT ABOUT IT
THERE'S A SIMILAR MASK USED IN KYOUGEN CALLED "USOBUKI" THAT REPRESENTS THE SPIRITS OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS
IN THE PLANTING AND FISHING DANCES IN KAGURA, SINCE THEY CLOWN AROUND WITH PUCKERED LIPS TO BRING GOOD FORTUNE THEY ARE ALSO CALLED "SHIOFUKI" (SALT-WATER SPOUTERS)
HUH IS THERE ANYTHING THIS GUY DOESN'T KNOW?
THEN THERE ARE PLACES WHERE THEY ARE EITHER FIRE GODS OR WIND GODS. IN AOMORI PREFECTURE THE IWAKIYAMA SHRINE HAS VOTIVE PICTURES OF HYOTTOKO MASKS AS SOUVENIRS.
YEAH, THAT'S ANOTHER THEORY BECAUSE WHEN SMITHS USE THE BELLOWS TO BLOW FIRE THEY LOOK LIKE HYOTTOKO, THE HYOTTOKO ARE BLACKSMITHING GODS.

THE REAL THING IS A TERRIFYING SPECTER!!
BUT! THE REAL HYOTTOKO ARE NOT NEARLY SO LOVABLE!

ARE YOU THE CHIEF PRIEST?
UMM. I'M SORRY I BARGED IN HERE WITHOUT PERMISSION!
!?

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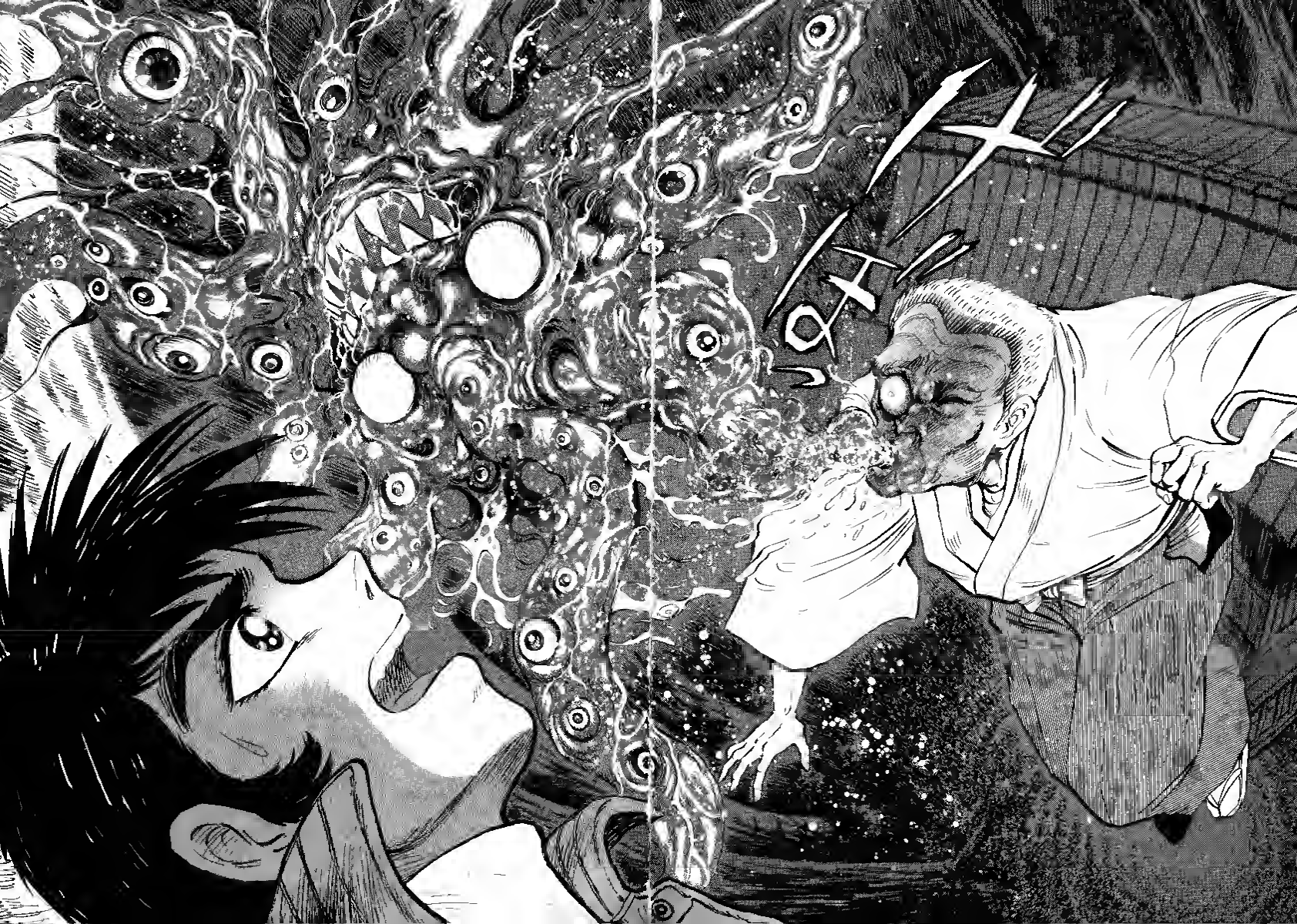
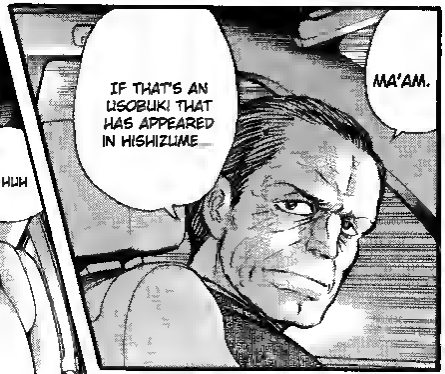
LOOK OUT!

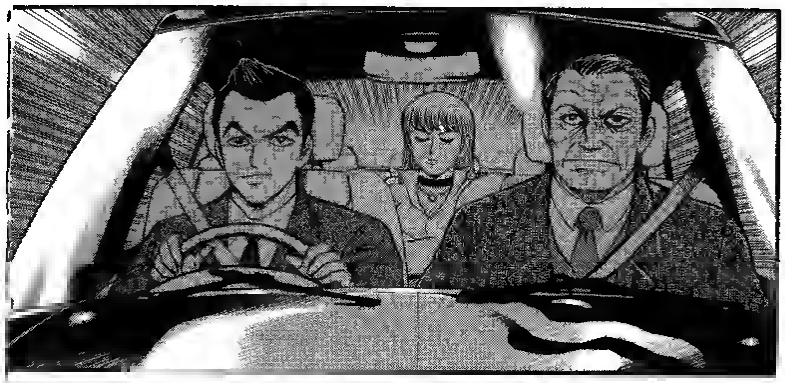
IT'S SO HIGH!
WHY ARE WE SO HIGH?
WOAH!

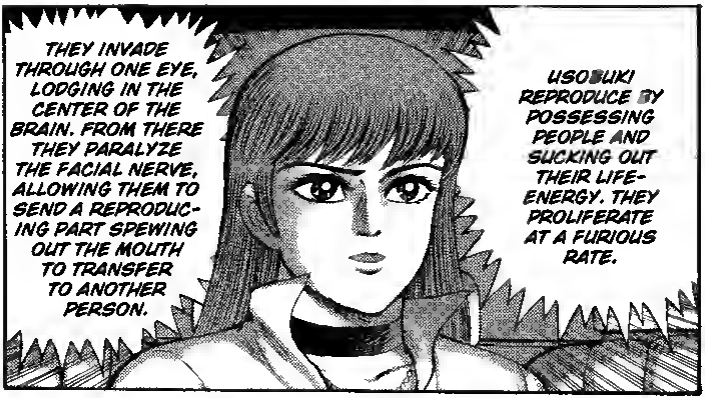


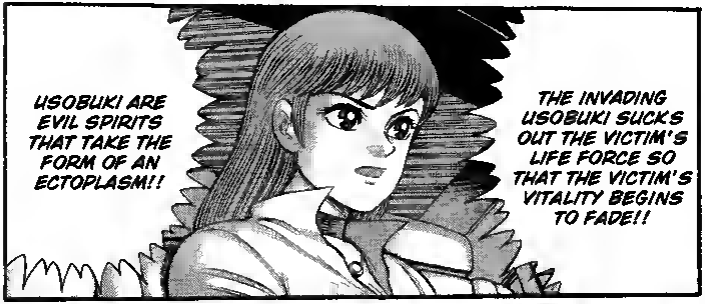
キキキー!

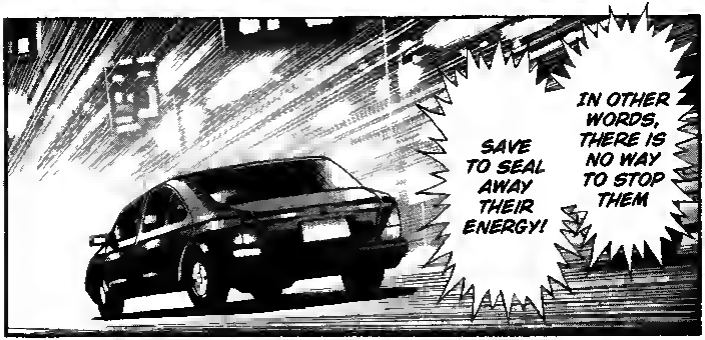
Heaven, Inc. President, Chikara Amatsu.
HUH-HUH

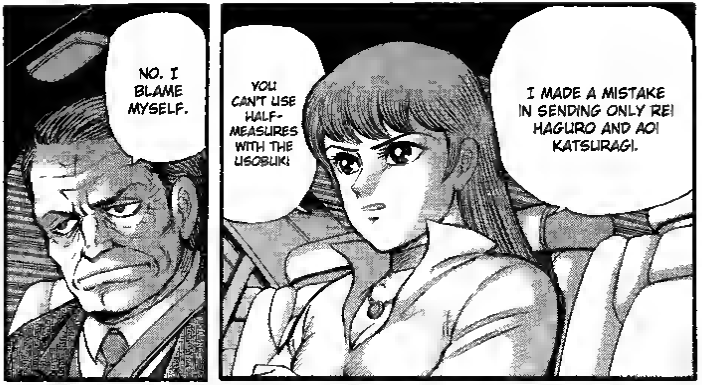

IF THAT'S AN USOBUKI THAT HAS APPEARED IN HISHIZUME—
MA'AM.



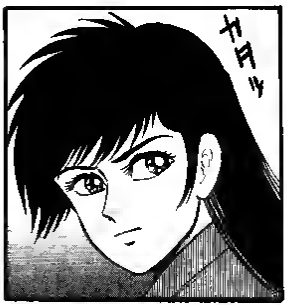

THEY INVADE THROUGH ONE EYE, LODGING IN THE CENTER OF THE BRAIN. FROM THERE THEY PARALYZE THE FACIAL NERVE, ALLOWING THEM TO SEND A REPRODUCING PART SPEWING OUT THE MOUTH TO TRANSFER TO ANOTHER PERSON.
USOBUKI REPRODUCE BY POSSESSING PEOPLE AND SUCKING OUT THEIR LIFE-ENERGY. THEY PROLIFERATE AT A FURIOUS RATE.


USOBUKI ARE EVIL SPIRITS THAT TAKE THE FORM OF AN ECTOPLASM!!
THE INVADING USOBUKI SUCKS OUT THE VICTIM'S LIFE FORCE SO THAT THE VICTIM'S VITALITY BEGINS TO FADE!!


IN OTHER WORDS, THERE IS NO WAY TO STOP THEM
SAVE TO SEAL AWAY THEIR ENERGY!


NO. I BLAME MYSELF.
YOU CAN'T USE HALF-MEASURES WITH THE USOBUKI
I MADE A MISTAKE IN SENDING ONLY REI HAGURO AND AOI KATSURAGI.

Sign: Marugami Inn



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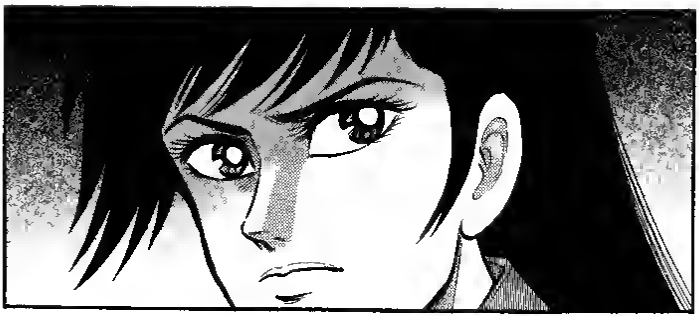
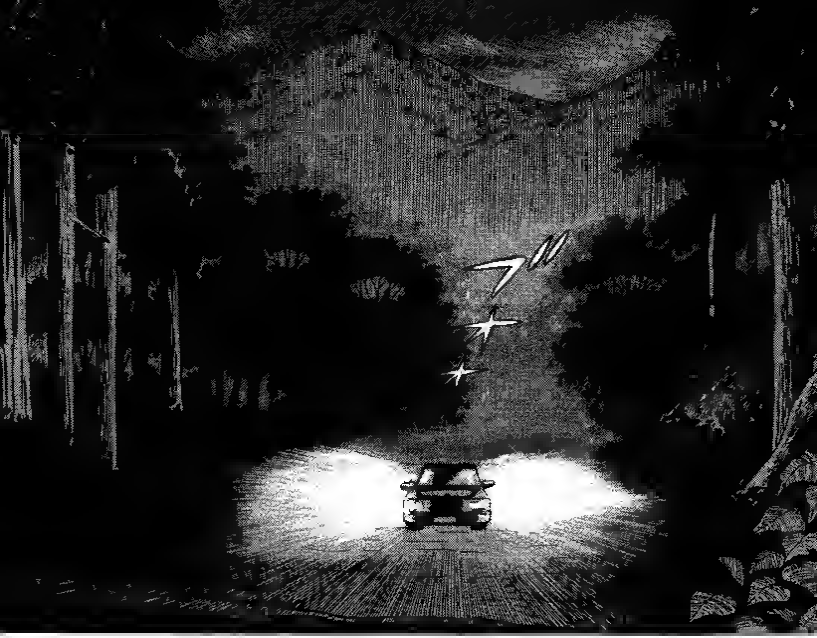
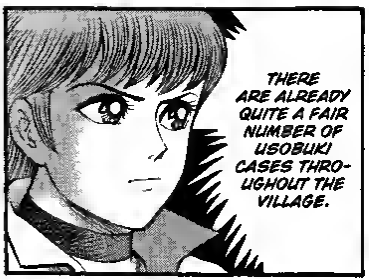
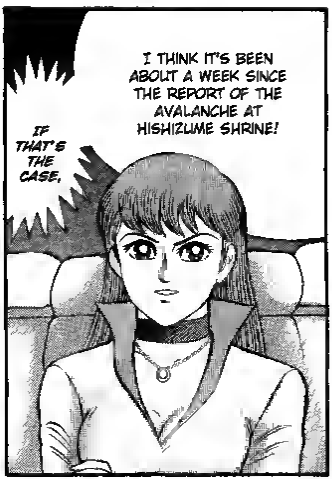





THERE ARE ALREADY QUITE A FAIR NUMBER OF USOBUKI CASES THROUGHOUT THE VILLAGE.


I THINK IT'S BEEN ABOUT A WEEK SINCE THE REPORT OF THE AVALANCHE AT HISHIZUME SHRINE!
IF THAT'S THE CASE,

EXACTLY

SEALED OFF IN ANCIENT TIMES BY EN-NO-GYOUJA, THE EVIL SPIRIT USOBUKI NOW PROPAGATING ARE A REAL THREAT!
WE CAN SCARCELY IGNORE THEM!
AND TO SAVE THE POSSESSED PEOPLE WE NEED A SOLUTION QUICKLY.
IF WE'RE TOO LATE, THEIR LIVES ARE FORFEIT!
WE CAN'T HAVE HEAVEN, INC. BEING CAUGHT UN-PREPARED!
AOI! I'M WORRIED ABOUT AOI KATSURAGI!

I'M GETTING OUT HERE!
FINE! STOP!
WHAT NEXT?
CHIEF EDITOR! I MEAN MR. DEWA! WE WILL SOON BE AT HISHIZUME!
I'M GOING TRY TO PREVENT ANYONE FROM LEAVING THE VILLAGE.
PRESIDENT AMATSU, I AM PUTTING A SHIELD UP.
BE CAREFUL, DEWA, THEY COULD BE ANYWHERE!
BE CAREFUL YOURSELF, PRESIDENT AMATSU! AKIBA! TAKE GOOD CARE OF HER!
UNDERSTOOD. I'LL KEEP MY EYES SHARP.

NAWAMAKU
SAMANDA
BODANAN
ADORA
UNKEN
ON!

!
WOW! THAT'S OLD MAN DEWA'S POWER!?
RIGHT, PRINCESS!
IT'S NOT LIKE SOMETHING THAT LOOKS LIKE A HYOTTOKO CAN BEAT HEAVEN'S HOUNDS.
CAREFUL WITH THE "PRINCESS!" I'M THE PRESIDENT OF HEAVEN, INC!!
RIGHT. THAT'S KENGO DEWA! HE'S STILL UNDER 300 SO HE LIKES TO SHOW OFF.
LET'S GO, AKIBA. WE NEED TO DEAL WITH THE USOBUKI WHILE DEWA'S SHIELD HOLDS.

HELP...!?
ウアアア

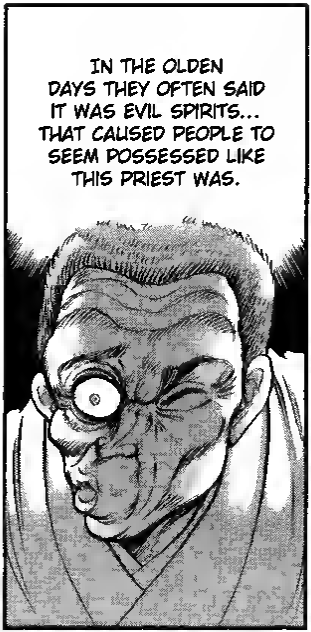
ハハっおっ
スゥン
!?

!
HUH
!?

WHO ARE YOU EXACTLY? YOU LOOK LIKE A COMPLETE IDIOT, BUT YOU'RE KIND OF AMAZING!
DISPELLING AN USOBUKI SO EASILY!?
WAAA !?
WHAT'S GOING ON!? IT'S LIKE I'M FLOATING!
YOU AREN'T FLOATING, I'M LEVITATING YOU!
!?
LOOK OUT I'M ABOUT TO LET GO. YOU'LL NEED TO STAND ON YOUR OWN.

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON!?
I WAS REALLY FLOATING IN THE AIR!
HEHEH...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. THE MORE IMPORTANT THING IS...
THAT!
I THINK HE'S DEAD.
IT LOOKS LIKE HE WAS CONTROLLED BY THE SPIRIT FOR TOO LONG...
IT HAD PROBABLY SUCKED ALL HIS LIFE ENERGY OUT.
SPIRIT!?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "SPIRIT?" THAT MONSTER THING!?

YOU MEAN THE ABILITY TO SEE SPIRITS AND GHOSTS AND THE LIKE?
THE THIRD EYE!?
TO SEE IT YOU MUST POSSESS THE 'THIRD EYE.'
BECAUSE IT'S USUALLY INVSIBLE.
HMMM... SO YOU COULD SEE THAT MONSTER?
AND BECAUSE OF THAT, NORMAL PEOPLE DON'T USUALLY SEE THEM!
THEY AREN'T PHYSICAL ENTITIES.
YEAH, KINDA. USOBUKI ARE COMPOSED OF SOMETHING LIKE SPIRIT ESSENCE.
SOMETIMES THEY ARE CALLED MAGATSUHI (CALAMITY SPIRITS) OR MAGATSUKAMI (CALAMITY GODS)

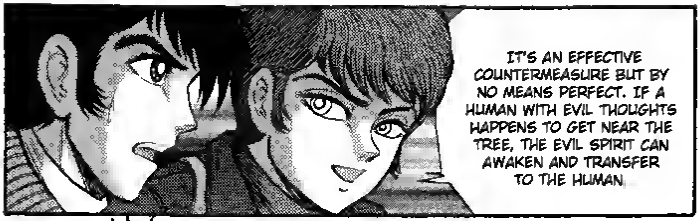

IN THE OLDEN DAYS THEY OFTEN SAID IT WAS EVIL SPIRITS... THAT CAUSED PEOPLE TO SEEM POSSESSED LIKE THIS PRIEST WAS.

SINCE ANCIENT TIMES THEY HAVE BEEN POSSESSING AND CONSUMING THE SOULS OF HUMANS!
IN OTHER WORDS, SPIRIT DEMONS!
GODS WHO BRING MISFOR-TUNE ON PEOPLE!

JUST AS THIS USOBUKI TRIED TO DO TO YOU, THEY SPREAD FROM PERSON TO PERSON BY ENTERING FROM THE EYE AND CONTROLLING THE BRAIN AND THE SOUL!

WITH MY OWN POWER?
THREW IT OFF? ME?
QUITE IMPR-ESSIVE.
BUT YOU THREW IT OFF, RIGHT?
HUH!? FROM MY EYE?
THE TREE! IT'S CLIN-GING TO THE TREE!
THAT IS THE EVIL SPIRIT YOU THREW OFF.
IN ANY CASE, WE'RE SAFE WITH IT CLINGING TO THE TREE FOR THE TIME BEING
LOOK! THERE IT IS!
YOU CAN SEE IT, RIGHT?

THAT'S THE SIGN OF AN EVIL SPIRIT THAT HAS BEEN COMPLETELY ASSIMILATED!
SOMETIMES THEY APPEAR AS KNOTS ON THE TREE.
FOR THAT REASON THERE ARE MANY CASES OF TREES THAT HAVE ABSORBED EVIL SPIRITS!
THEY CAN'T BE CONTROLLED LIKE PEOPLE CAN!
TREES HAVE VERY SERENE SPIRITS!
THEN WHY CAN'T WE JUST ATTACH THEM ALL TO TREES?


IT'S AN EFFECTIVE COUNTERMEASURE BUT BY NO MEANS PERFECT. IF A HUMAN WITH EVIL THOUGHTS HAPPENS TO GET NEAR THE TREE, THE EVIL SPIRIT CAN AWAKEN AND TRANSFER TO THE HUMAN.

THAT OLD HOKORO WAS A SEAL!?
SEAL IT OFF!?
THE ONLY WAY IS FOR ONE WITH THE POWER TO SEAL IT OFF.
IT'S NOT A PHYSICAL OBJECT! IT'S A SPIRIT, SO THERE IS NO WAY TO ACTUALLY DESTROY IT!

USOBUKI GRADUALLY INCREASE AS IF THEY WERE A CONTAGIOUS DISEASE!
HUH!?
NEVER MIND THAT. I'M WORRIED ABOUT MY COMPANION BACK AT THE INN.
THAT REMINDS ME. THE INN-KEEPER BACK AT MARUGAMI INN HAD A STRANGE EYE TWITCH.
THEY COULD HAVE GOTTEN HIM, TOO!
WE NEED TO HURRY!

AH...
IS THERE SOMETHING YOU NEED?
AH...
CAREFUL, AOI. THAT VILLAGE IS INFESTED WITH USOBUKI!
CHI-KARA!?

AHHHHH!
WHAT!?

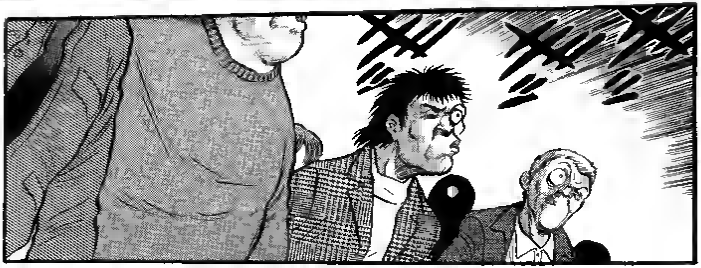
!?
12

JUST NOW YOU WERE ABLE TO FLY. WHY DON'T WE JUST FLY OVER THEM...?
I THINK THEY'RE HERE TO STOP US.
DAMN...
UH OH! IT'S REALLY SPREADING!
A SUPERPOWER!? HOW DID YOU GET A POWER LIKE THAT?
A BRIEF SHIELDING OF GRAVITY THAT ALLOWS ME TO FLOAT.
I CAN ONLY FLY A LITTLE BIT. IT'S MORE LIKE FLOATING THAN FLYING, REALLY.

HEAVEN'S HOUNDS!? CELESTIAL FOX!?
I'M REI HAGURO, FROM THE BLOODLINE OF THE CELESTIAL FOX. I'M ONE OF HEAVEN'S HOUNDS!
GET IT? IT DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY. I WAS BORN WITH IT!

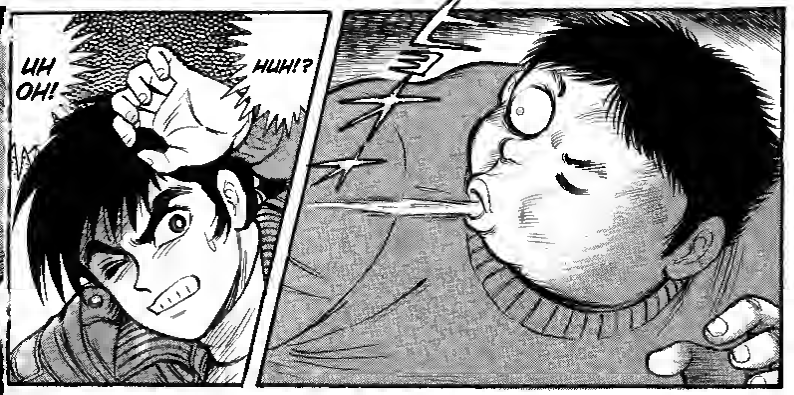
THE TENGU THEY CALLED THE IMPERIAL DOGS IN THE OLDEN DAYS!? THOSE TENGU!?
T-TENGU!
IN THE OLD DAYS THEY CALLED IT THE TENGU'S LEADING ATTACK.
THESE DAYS, MY POWERS ARE KNOWN AS 'LEVITATION'

WE'LL HAVE TO FIGHT OUR WAY THROUGH.
THESE PEOPLE ARE NO LONGER HUMAN.
ANYWAY, IT'S USELESS TO FLY OVER. THESE GUYS ARE BEING CONTROLLED BY USOBUKI.
YOU WERE ABLE TO DO IT BEFORE!
PUT UP A BARRIER AROUND YOUR FACE TO KEEP THEM FROM ENTERING?
WHAT IF THE USOBUKI START COMING OUT OF THEIR MOUTHS LIKE WITH THE PRIEST EARLIER?
LET'S GO!



MOVE IT, MOVE IT! IT'S TOO LATE FOR YOU GUYS! BUT THERE ARE PLENTY LEFT WE CAN STILL SAVE.
OUTTA THE WAY!
MOVE!

ロオー!!


UH OH!
HUH!?

!?

Namaaku
नमः
Samanda
समन्त
Vajaraadam Kan
वज्राणाहाँ
Oh Bazara
ॐ वज्र
Dat Bam.
धातु व

AND AKIBA WITH HER!
AH! THE PRESI-DENT!

ウワーン
WHA...!?
AMA-ZING!
WHO'S THE KID?
THE ONE I TOLD YOU ABOUT

APPARENTLY SO...
SEE? LIKE I SAID
WHOAH! IT'S COMING OUT AGAIN!

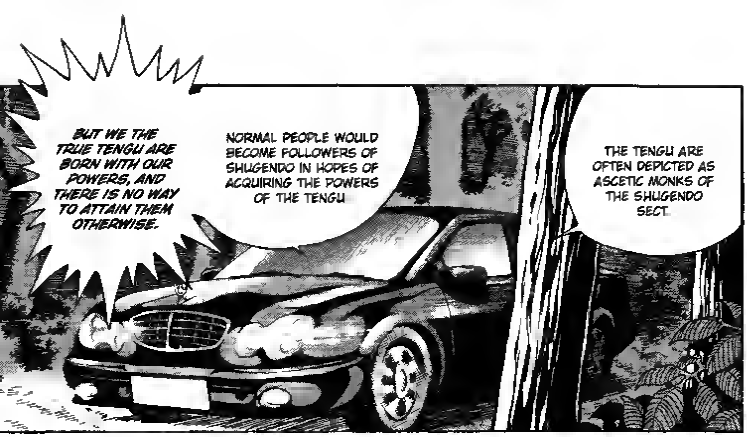
HAGURO, AKIBA! FOLLOW THOSE SPIRIT ENTITIES!
I'M TAKING YOUNG INUI WITH ME TO THE INN!
RIGHT.
MS. PRESIDENT, PLEASE LOOK OUT FOR MS. KATSURAGI.

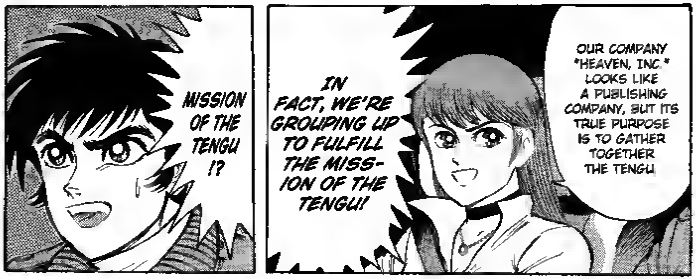
YOU'RE SHINPEI INUI, RIGHT? GET IN THE CAR!
WE'RE IN A HURRY! OFF TO MARUGAMI INN!
HUH!?
HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME!?
HAGURO SENT ME A TELEPATHIC MESSAGE
BUT NEVER MIND THAT. GET IN THE CAR!
O... OKAY!

AT THAT TIME IN JAPAN, THE KANJI FOR "HOUND" WAS USED FOR "FOX."
SOME MONKS WHO SAW IT SAID IT WAS NOT A METEOR. RATHER, THEY SAID IT WAS THE CELESTIAL FOX
IT'S THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME "TENGU" A STORY FROM ABOUT YEAR 637
DO YOU KNOW THE STORY IN THE ANCIENT CHRONICLES ABOUT THE ROARING SHOOTING STAR?
THEY ALSO THOUGHT IT WOULD BE RELATED TO THE THE THUNDER BEAST, A MONSTER THAT LANDS WHERE THUNDER STRIKES.
BUT IN CHINA THE WORD MEANT "DOG." THEY APPARENTLY THOUGHT THAT WHERE THE ROARING SHOOTING STAR LANDED THEY WOULD FIND SOMETHING RELATED TO DOGS
SO THEY SEEM TO HAVE THOUGHT IT HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH FOXES
THERE IS A SPECIFIC REASON THE "CELESTIAL FOX" METEOR CREATED THE TENGU IMAGE.
BUT ACTUALLY...
WHEN THE LEGEND OF THE HOUNDS OF HEAVEN ARRIVED IN JAPAN FROM CHINA, IT GRADUALLY ACQUIRED THE TYPICAL TENGU IMAGE OF THE LONG-NOSED DEMON

THE METEOR RECORDED IN THE ANCIENT CHRONICLES THAT FELL ON FEBRUARY 23, 637 WAS ACTUALLY WHAT WE WOULD NOW CALL A UFO A SHIP FROM ANOTHER WORLD!
THE PEOPLE THAT EMERGED FROM THIS SHIP CAME TO BE CALLED TENGU!
IN OTHER WORDS, OUR ADVANCE PARTY!

A SUPER POWER!
YOU WERE ALSO BORN WITH A POWER!
YOU'RE A DESCENDANT OF THE TENGU AS WELL!
YOU, TOO...
YOUR...
YOU COULD SEE THE EVIL SPIRITS, COULDN'T YOU? NORMAL PEOPLE CAN'T SEE THEM!
THERE'S NO WAY I HAVE ANYTHING LIKE THAT!
THEY ARE SAID TO HAVE ATTACHED RESPIRATORY DEVICES TO THE END OF THEIR NOSES.
BUT BECAUSE THE FIRST TENGU HAD NOT YET ADAPTED TO EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE,
AH HA HA HA. MINE EITHER OTHER THAN OUR POWERS, YOU MIGHT AS WELL SAY THERE'S NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US AND EARTHLINGS.
BUT MY NOSE ISN'T LONG...


BUT WE THE TRUE TENGU ARE BORN WITH OUR POWERS, AND THERE IS NO WAY TO ATTAIN THEM OTHERWISE.
NORMAL PEOPLE WOULD BECOME FOLLOWERS OF SHUGENDO IN HOPES OF ACQUIRING THE POWERS OF THE TENGU.
THE TENGU ARE OFTEN DEPICTED AS ASCETIC MONKS OF THE SHUGENDO SECT.


MISSION OF THE TENGU !?
IN FACT, WE'RE GROUPING UP TO FULFILL THE MISS-ION OF THE TENGU!
OUR COMPANY "HEAVEN, INC." LOOKS LIKE A PUBLISHING COMPANY, BUT ITS TRUE PURPOSE IS TO GATHER TOGETHER THE TENGU.

YET ANOTHER IMPERIAL DOG IS IN A FIX!
WE'RE HERE! MARUGAMI INN!

WELCOME ABOARD!
SHINPEI INUI, YOU TOO ARE A TENGU. YOU ALSO MUST FULFILL THE MISSION, AND I EXPECT YOU TO JOIN HEAVEN, INC.!

AOI!! ARE YOU OKAY!?
ｶﾀｶﾀ
AA...
MY FATHER... HE SUDDENLY... THE CUSTOMER !!

!?
AOI!?

AOI, YOU'VE DIVED...
THIS IS...
DIVED...
SHE'S HAS ENTERED THE MIND OF THIS USOBUKI-POSSESSED INNKEEPER.
AOI KATSURAGI IS A PSYCHE DIVER. SHE CAN INVADE THE THE MINDS OF OTHER PEOPLE

SHE IS FIGHTING TO SEPARATE THE MAGA-TSUHI FROM HIS POS-SESSED SPIRIT!

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Amrite
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Barata
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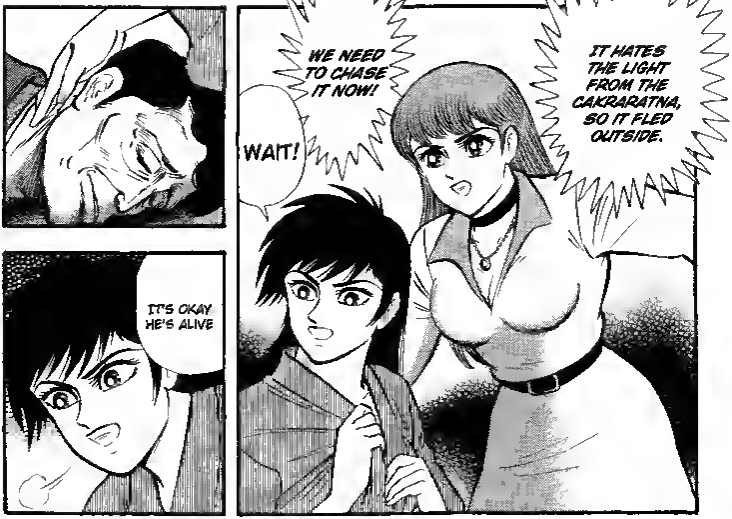
GUFU...

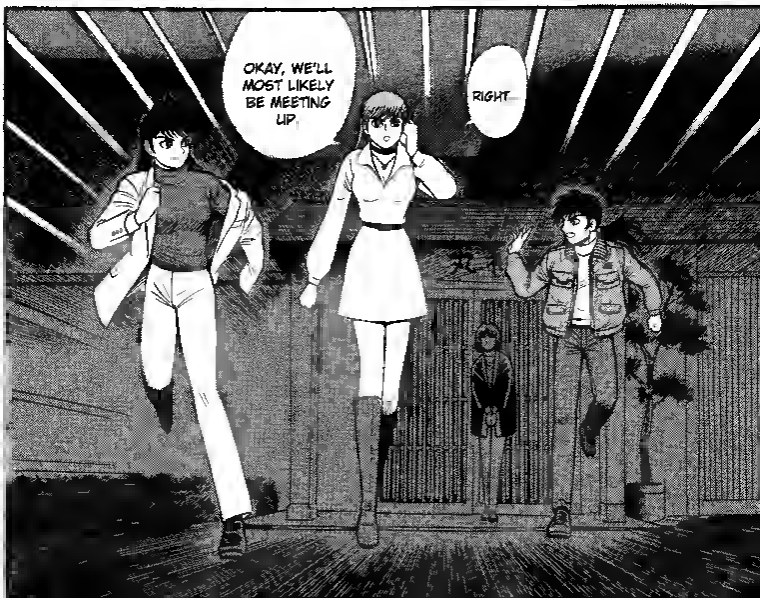
UN-
CLEAN
SPIRIT!
BEGONE!
ओं
वज्रयक्ष
हुं

アオン

IT'S OUT!

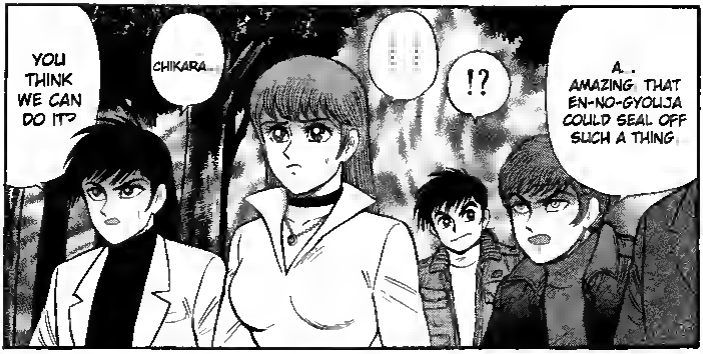
OM VAJRAYA
ओ वज्र
DHATO VAM
धातु व
ARE YOU ALRIGHT, AOI!?
YOU CAME, CHIKARA?
HEY, WHERE IS THE SPRIT MONSTER?


IT'S OKAY HE'S ALIVE
WAIT!
WE NEED TO CHASE IT NOW!
IT HATES THE LIGHT FROM THE CAKRARATNA, SO IT FLED OUTSIDE.


OKAY, WE'LL MOST LIKELY BE MEETING UP.
RIGHT

IF SO, WE'LL HAVE IT CORNERED!
OLD MAN DEWA— I MEAN, THE CHIEF EDITOR IS HERE!
ONCE THE MONSTER REALIZED THE VILLAGE WAS SEALED, IT BECAME QUITE AGITATED!
PRESIDENT AMATSU, THEY'RE COMING!
!?
BUT THE EVIL SPIRITS THAT WERE SUCKING THEIR ENERGY ALL COMBINED TOGETHER.
WE TOOK DOWN ALL OF THE VILLAGERS

IT'S THE COMBINED SPIRIT MASS!!
SO HUGE IN SUCH A SHORT TIME!
!
GH... GHOST!
IT'S MORE LIKE AN EVIL DEMON!


YOU THINK WE CAN DO IT?
CHIKARA...
!?
A... AMAZING. THAT EN-NO-GYOUJA COULD SEAL OFF SUCH A THING.

M... MR. CHAIRMAN!
!
DID SOMEBODY CALL ME?

CHIKARA AMATSU, FORGET NOT!
IF YOU ARE HESITATING BEFORE SOMETHING LIKE THIS, YOU ARE NOT YET READY!

WE ARE NOT COWED BEFORE PETTY EVIL GODS!
WE ARE HEAVEN'S HOUNDS!! WE ARE DESCENDED FROM BEINGS WHO FREELY ROAMED THE UNIVERSE!!

I PRAY THIS NEW SEAL LASTS A THOUSAND YEARS.
HMM

THIS TIME WE WERE ABLE TO RELY ON THE CHAIRMAN'S POWER... THE NEXT TIME USOBUKI APPEAR WE WILL HAVE TO DO IT OURSELVES, RIGHT?
TO THAT END WE CANNOT BE CONTENT TO RELY ON OUR INNATE POWERS EACH OF US MUST WORK TO EXPAND OUR POWERS..
FURTHER-MORE...
!?
WE NEED NEW POWER !!

SHINPEI INUI! I EXPECT YOU TO JOIN HEAVEN, INC.!
IMPORTANT WORK AWAITS YOU THERE!
.....
♬

I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED, BUT THAT COMPANY PRESIDENT HAS TAKEN AN INTEREST IN YOU
THAT'S GREAT, SHINPEI!

YEEEAH.

I'M SO RELIEVED YOU'LL BE A REGULAR COMPANY EMPLOYEE!
WOW, THAT'S GREAT! YOU WON'T BE HANGING AROUND GOOFING OFF ANY MORE.
HEAVEN, INC IS A PUBLISHING COMPANY!
AFTER MAKING IT ALL THE WAY THROUGH COLLEGE, I THOUGHT IT WAS SUCH A WASTE!
PERFECT! IT SUITS YOU!

WHAT CAN I DO IN THE MIDST OF SUCH AMAZING SUPERHEROES? AND WHAT THE HECK IS THE MISSION OF THE TENGU...!?
AM I REALLY ONE OF HEAVEN'S HOUNDS? DO I REALLY HAVE A HUGE POWER LIKE THAT...?

YEP...
WE DID IT, BOSS...

HIS HEAD WAS BLEEDING
THINK WE KILLED HIM?
HEHE
WE JUST BEAT THE CRAP OUT OF HIM WITH A WOODEN SWORD, AND HE FELL RIGHT OVER.
PIECE O' CAKE. HE WAS LOADED WITH ALL THAT FUCKIN' MONEY.
YEAH...
WHO GIVES A SHIT IF HE DIED?
WE WERE JUST PASSING BY, NO WAY WILL THEY CATCH US!
RIGHT! HAHAHA...

Chapter 2:
Kamaitachi

AT HEAVEN, INC...
HERE I AM...
WELL...

HUH? B-BUT...
THE PRESIDENT PUT OUT AN ANNOUNCE-MENT!
YOU'RE SHINPEI INUI, RIGHT? THE NEW MEMBER OF THE EDITO-RIAL STAFF?
I HEARD WHAT TIME YOU'D BE COMING TEN DAYS AGO!
DON'T I KNOW IT! BUT THERE'S NOTHING OUR PRESIDENT CAN'T PREDICT!
I JUST MADE UP MY MIND TO COME TO HEAVEN INC THIS MORNING...
SO HERE WE ARE PLEASE.
AH... HAH.
BUT I'VE ALREADY BEEN HERE 3 MONTHS SO I'M YOUR SENIOR, EVEN THOUGH I'M YOUNGER.
I'M ALSO A NEWBIE AT MONTHLY MYST!
I'M RAN KURAMA. I'LL BE SHOWING YOU AROUND!

THIS IS THE EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT OF MYST
DON'T BE SHY! NOBODY IS IN YET!
EVERYONE'S OUT ON ASSIGNMENT
THAT'S CHIEF EDITOR DEWA'S DESK!
THIS IS MY DESK! NEXT TO ME IS A CHUBBY GUY NAMED IZUMO!
THAT CORNER IS THE LOUNGE AREA

I'D MUCH RATHER HAVE YOU SITTING HERE...
IT'S NO BIGGIE I STILL DON'T LIKE THAT GUY.

HUH? WHAT ABOUT THE CHUBBY GUY? DIDN'T YOU SAY IT WAS HIS?
YOU CAN USE THIS DESK NEXT TO ME.

JUST SEX BOOKS AND DIRTY MAGAZINES!

JUST TO MOVE IT WITHOUT ASKING?
IS IT OKAY?
HELP ME MOVE IZUMO'S STUFF!
OH, IT'S FINE ANYWAY, HE DOESN'T HAVE MUCH...

I SEE...
I'LL BE MUCH HAPPIER WITHOUT HIM SO CLOSE

GOOD MORNING, ARE YOU MOVING?
HUH!?
GOOD MORNING, CHIEF. I'M SWITCHING MR. IZUMO'S PLACE
AH, INUI, CORRECT? I READ YOUR RESUME
UM. I DON'T HAVE A RESUME. THE PRESIDENT TOLD ME I DIDN'T NEED ANYTHING. JUST TO COME.
HUH ...!?
OH, RIGHT... THAT WAS A TELEPATHIC IMAGE FROM HER...
IT'S ALRIGHT, SHINPEI. THE CHIEF IS OLDER SO HE OFTEN GETS CONFUSED ...

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チャ
HEHE HEHE..
HEE... HEHE. YUM...

KYAAAAAAH!
KYAAAAH!
YUCK!
KYA!

UH HUH!
COULD YOU SEE MY PANTIES?
EWWW... THIS WIND IS TERRIBLE AND IT'S RIGHT BY THE RIVERBANK!

UM...
?
HUH?
HEY, YOKO, SOMETHING...

BLOOD! THERE'S BLOOD COMING DOWN YOUR LEG!
WHAT? NO WAY!
AH! MY SKIRT HAS A LITTLE CUT, TOO
HOW!?
IT'S LIKE IT WAS CUT WITH A RAZOR!
HUH!?
BUT... WHEN?
!?

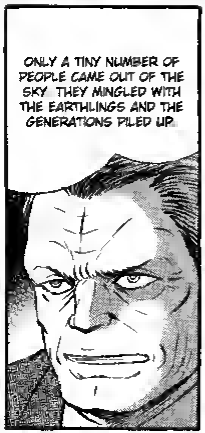
MR SHINPEI INUI THANK YOU FOR COMING RECOGNIZING YOUR STATUS AS A ONE OF THE DESCENDANTS OF THE CELESTIAL FOX, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE HOUNDS OF HEAVEN, I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME YOU AS AN EMPLOYEE HERE AT HEAVEN, INC

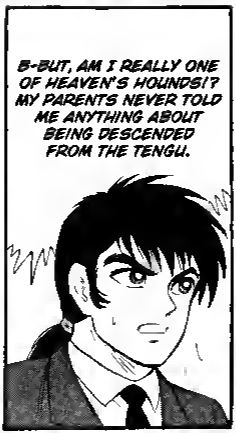
THE PUBLISHING COMPANY IS JUST CAMOUFLAGE.
I DON'T HAVE MUCH CONFIDENCE I CAN DO IT, BUT...
UM, I DON'T REALLY HAVE ANY EXPERIENCE AS AN EDITOR, AND...
!
EXACTLY RIGHT, MA'AM.
RIGHT, DEWA?
AS LONG AS YOU LOOK CONVINCING, THAT'S ENOUGH.
OUR BOOKS COME OUT WITHOUT US DOING ANYTHING.

IF THERE'S AN ARTICLE YOU LIKE, BY ALL MEANS PUBLISH IT. YOU CAN ALSO COMMISSION AUTHORS AND WRITERS
OF COURSE, IF YOU WANT TO WORK AS AN EDITOR THAT'S FINE
WE HAVE A BACKUP ORGANIZATION.
THE REPORTS WE GET FROM READERS HELP US FIND THE SERIOUS CASES
WE PLIT OUT THE MAGAZINE TO GET LEADS
THE USOBUKI CASE WHERE WE MET WAS REPORTED BY THE DAUGHTER OF THE INNKEEPER.
THAT MEANS... THE REAL JOB IS...
BEING ONE OF HEAVEN'S HOUNDS!

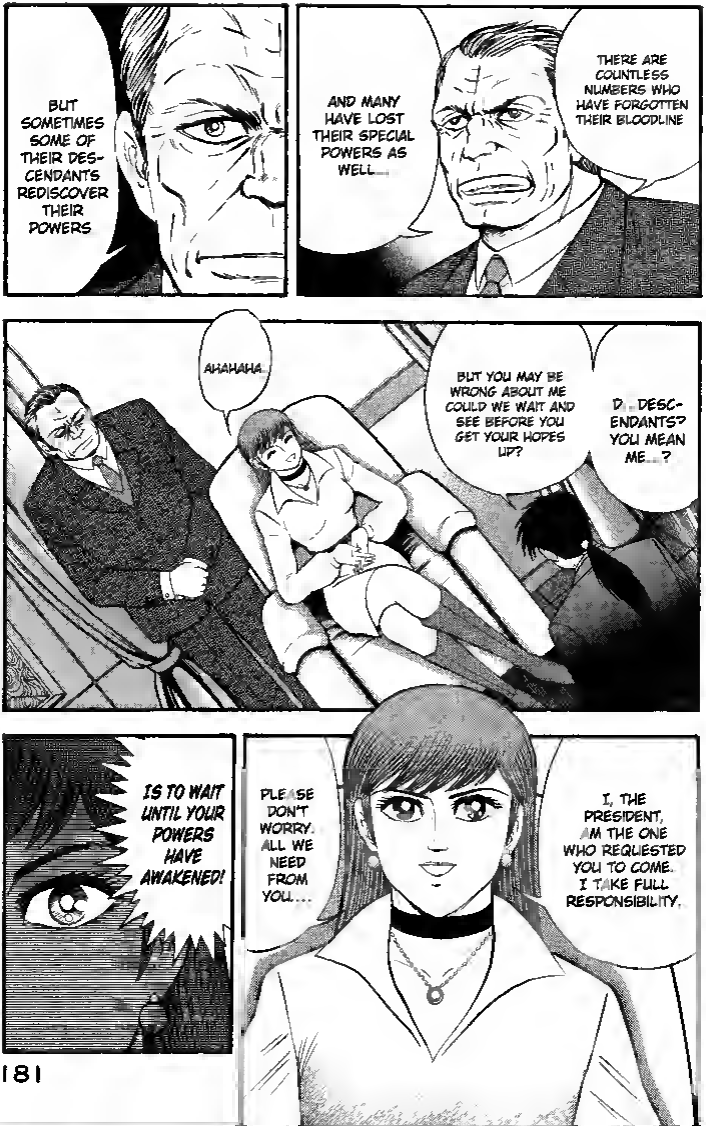
IT'S A BATTLE WITH THE OTHER WORLD!
A BATTLE TO SAVE THIS WORLD!

THERE ARE MORE THINGS IN THIS WORLD THAN ARE VISIBLE ON THE SURFACE!
THE VISIBLE WORLD AND THIS HIDDEN "OTHERWORLD" ARE JOINED TOGETHER TO MAKE UP OUR UNIVERSE!
THERE IS A HIDDEN WORLD PEOPLE DO NOT SEE!


ONLY A TINY NUMBER OF PEOPLE CAME OUT OF THE SKY. THEY MINGLED WITH THE EARTHLINGS AND THE GENERATIONS PILED UP.

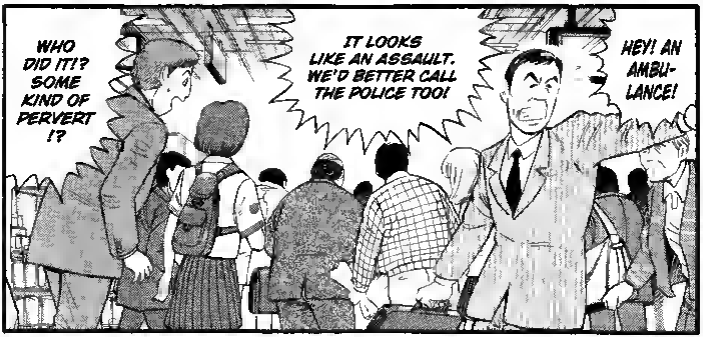

B-BUT, AM I REALLY ONE OF HEAVEN'S HOUNDS!? MY PARENTS NEVER TOLD ME ANYTHING ABOUT BEING DESCENDED FROM THE TENGU.

THOSE WHO BATTLE AGAINST THE FORCES OF EVIL IN THE OTHER WORLD THAT IS INVISIBLE TO NORMAL PEOPLE ARE HEAVEN'S HOUNDS!!


THERE ARE COUNTLESS NUMBERS WHO HAVE FORGOTTEN THEIR BLOODLINE
AND MANY HAVE LOST THEIR SPECIAL POWERS AS WELL...
BUT SOMETIMES SOME OF THEIR DESCENDANTS REDISCOVER THEIR POWERS
D...DESCENDANTS? YOU MEAN ME...?
BUT YOU MAY BE WRONG ABOUT ME COULD WE WAIT AND SEE BEFORE YOU GET YOUR HOPES UP?
AHAHAHA
I, THE PRESIDENT, AM THE ONE WHO REQUESTED YOU TO COME. I TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY.
PLEASE DON'T WORRY. ALL WE NEED FROM YOU...
IS TO WAIT UNTIL YOUR POWERS HAVE AWAKENED!

AAA ...
OWWW!
あぁっ
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU!?
AA ...!
!?
WHAT HAPPENED !?

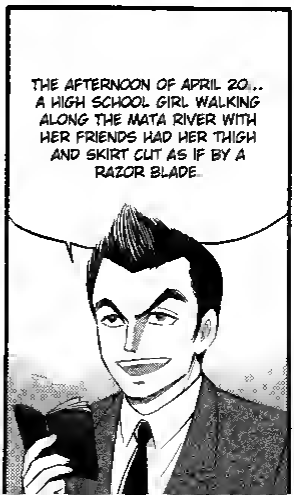
WHO...!? AN AMBULANCE! CALL AN AMBULANCE!
AH! BLOOD! SHE'S BEEN CUT UP ALL OVER!


WHO DID IT!? SOME KIND OF PERVERT !?
IT LOOKS LIKE AN ASSAULT. WE'D BETTER CALL THE POLICE TOO!
HEY! AN AMBU-LANCE!

HUH!? KAMAITACHI!?
YES
OUR INFORMATION IS STILL SKETCHY, SO WE CAN'T CONFIRM IT BUT THE POSSIBILITY EXISTS.
IF SO
IT'S QUITE DANGEROUS?
PRECISELY
IF IT IS KAMAITACHI, WE HAVE TO MOVE QUICKLY

WE NEED A COUNTER MEASURE
THAT'S RIGHT. WE WILL DISCUSS IT NOW.
DON'T BE AN IDIOT! THIS IS YOUR JOB!
SHOULD I SUDDENLY BE JOINING A MEETING LIKE THIS?

AS WE MIGHT EXPECT, THE WOUNDS SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN MADE WITH A RAZOR BLADE.
ON THE AFTERNOON OF APRIL 26 IN FRONT OF YOSHIZUMI STATION, A FEMALE 24 YEAR-OLD OFFICE WORKER WAS SLICED MANY TIMES THROUGH HER CLOTHING AND COLLAPSED!


THE AFTERNOON OF APRIL 20... A HIGH SCHOOL GIRL WALKING ALONG THE MATA RIVER WITH HER FRIENDS HAD HER THIGH AND SKIRT CUT AS IF BY A RAZOR BLADE.

THIS FOOD LURES 'EM RIGHT IN...
CATS ARE GREAT.. SO EASY TO CATCH..
HEHE HEHE

I ESPECIALLY LIKE THE GIRLS THAT LOOK JUST YOUNG ENOUGH TO BE IN THEIR HIGH TEENS
MY FAVORITES ARE CATS AND GIRLS
EEE HEE HEE..
THEY'RE SO CUTE DURING THE TIME THEY DON'T KNOW I'M GONNA KILL 'EM
THEY BECOME EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL! HEEEHE HEHEH!
SLICE BEAUTIFUL THINGS.. COVER THEM WITH BLOOD...
GIRLS AND CATS BOTH ARE SUPPLE AND BEAUTIFUL!
THERE ARE SO MANY PEOPLE WHO DON'T UNDERSTAND FINE ART!
IT'S JUST THAT I HAVE A FINE SENSE OF AESTHETIC!
トレビレビ
THIS OLD APARTMENT HAS THIN WALLS. IF THE NEIGHBORS HEAR ME, IT'LL BE BAD!
UH OH. I SHOUTED IT OUT WITHOUT THINKING
THEY'LL THINK ME A PERVERT!

CATS LICK THEIR FUR AND END UP SWALLOWING IT...
IS IT A HAIRBALL?
ケホッ
ケホッ
HUH?
I'M COUGHING UP HAIRBALLS LIKE A CAT!?
HA... HAIR BALL!?

LIKE A CAT!

WHAT EXACTLY IS A... KAMAITACHI?

WHO KNOWS?

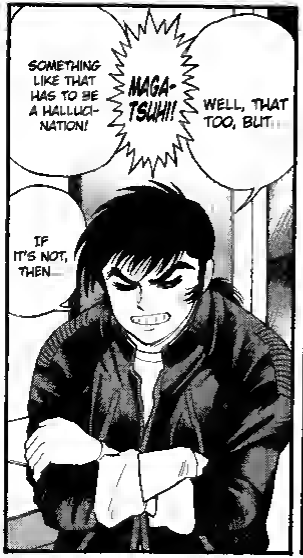
AGAIN! THIS MAKES THE 5TH CASE...
AND JUST LIKE KAMAITACHI
HEAVEN, INC

WHAT DO YOU THINK, HAGURO?
ARE THEY MAGATSUHI LIKE THE USOBUKI ARE?

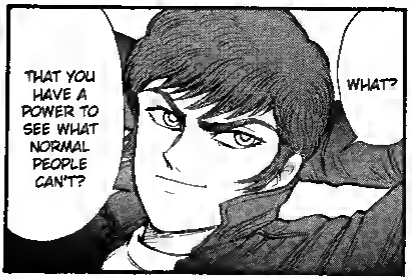
WHO KNOWS?

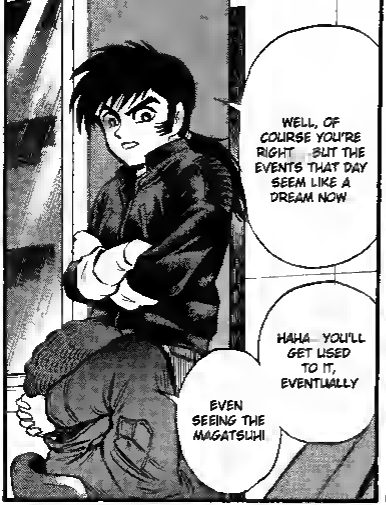
WE ONLY KNOW ABOUT IT FROM RECORDS
NONE OF US SKY PEOPLE WERE INVOLVED...
IT'S A PHENOMENON FROM WAY BACK, BUT NO ONE KNOWS WHAT IT REALLY IS

BUT...
HMM... I SEE...
THEY CERTAINLY AREN'T A NATURAL PHENOMENON.
WELL, I THINK THE PRESIDENT THINKS SO.


SOMETHING LIKE THAT HAS TO BE A HALLUCI-NATION!
MAGA-TSUHI!
WELL, THAT TOO, BUT...
IF IT'S NOT, THEN...

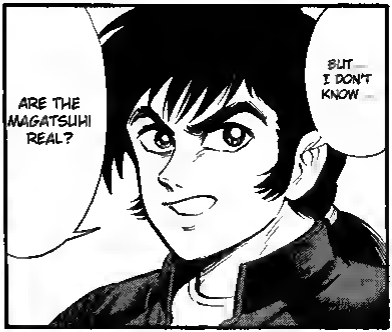
IT'S STILL HARD TO BELIEVE...
EVEN THOUGH I COULD SEE THE MAGAT-SUHI THAT DAY...

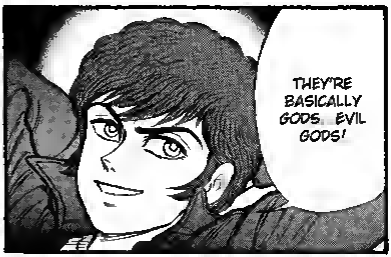

THAT YOU HAVE A POWER TO SEE WHAT NORMAL PEOPLE CAN'T?
WHAT?


WELL, OF COURSE YOU'RE RIGHT... BUT THE EVENTS THAT DAY SEEM LIKE A DREAM NOW
HAHA... YOU'LL GET USED TO IT, EVENTUALLY
EVEN SEEING THE MAGATSUHI

IF YOU CAN'T BELIEVE THAT, WHAT CAN YOU BELIEVE?
AH HAH HAH... SO YOU DON'T EVEN BELIEVE YOUR OWN EYES?

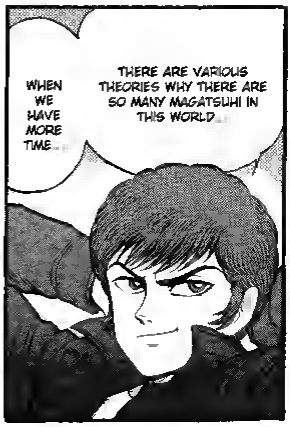
HAS ANYONE EVER HAD A REQUEST GRANTED BY A GOD? DO GODS EXIST? NOT EXIST? IF THEY EXIST, WHAT FORM DO THEY TAKE?

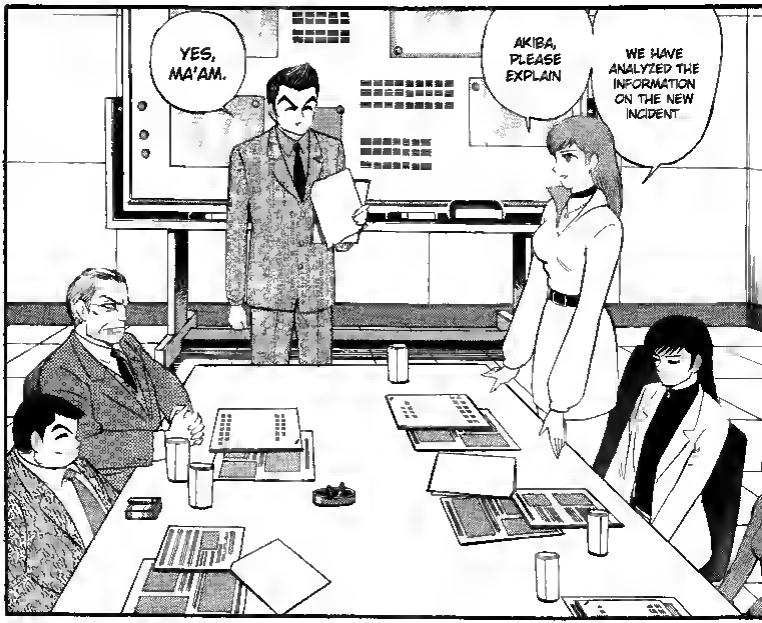

ARE THE MAGATSUHI REAL?
BUT... I DON'T KNOW...


THEY'RE BASICALLY GODS... EVIL GODS!

IF THEY WERE GOOD TO PEOPLE, THEY WERE CALLED GODS AND WORSHIPED. IF THEY WERE BAD TO PEOPLE, THEY WERE CALLED SPIRIT MONSTERS, DEMONS, OR DEVILS
IF GODS DO EXIST, ARE THEY ALWAYS GOOD TO HUMANS? AREN'T THERE ANY EVIL ONES?
WHAT IF GODS AND SPIRIT BEINGS WERE ORIGINALLY ONE AND THE SAME?
IN ANY CASE, WHEN THE PEOPLE OF THE CELESTIAL FOX CAME OUT OF THE SKY, THEY WERE QUITE SURPRISED BY THE AMOUNT OF INTERFERING ENERGY ON THIS WORLD.
THEY NAMED THIS INTERFERING SPIRIT ENERGY "MAGATSUHI" AND BEGAN TO SEAL IT OFF.

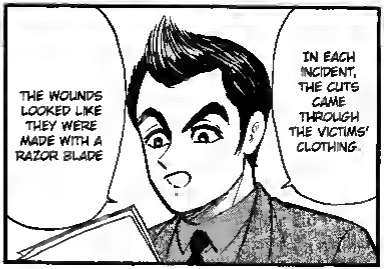
HUH!?
THERE IT IS, THE PRESIDENT'S CALLING! LET'S GO!

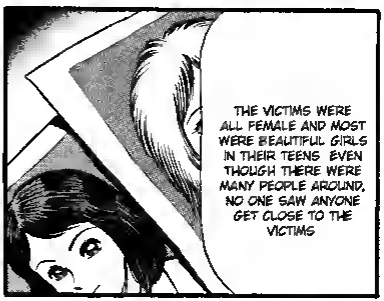

WHEN WE HAVE MORE TIME...
THERE ARE VARIOUS THEORIES WHY THERE ARE SO MANY MAGATSUHI IN THIS WORLD...


YES, MA'AM.
AKIBA, PLEASE EXPLAIN
WE HAVE ANALYZED THE INFORMATION ON THE NEW INCIDENT.

I AM OMITTING THE PARTICULARS OF EACH INCIDENT.
INSTEAD, I WILL FOCUS ON THE COMMON FEATURES.

IT SEEMS AS THOUGH THE INCIDENTS ARE GETTING WORSE... THAT IS...
THE VICTIMS ARE SUFFERING MORE CUTS. IN THIS LATEST, THE VICTIM'S CLOTHES WERE SUDDENLY SHREDDED.
THIS IS...


IN EACH INCIDENT, THE CUTS CAME THROUGH THE VICTIMS' CLOTHING.
THE WOUNDS LOOKED LIKE THEY WERE MADE WITH A RAZOR BLADE

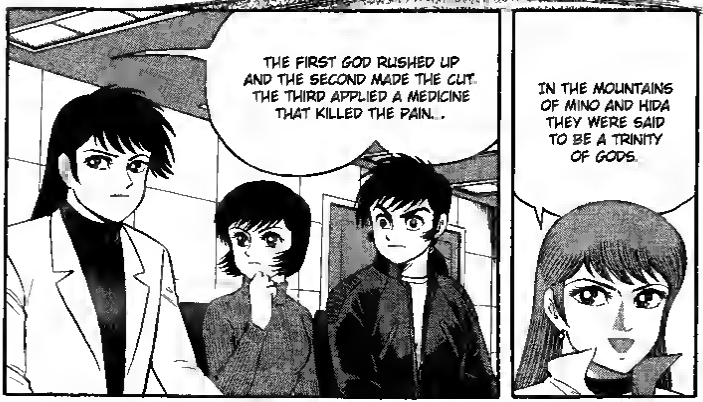

THE VICTIMS WERE ALL FEMALE AND MOST WERE BEAUTIFUL GIRLS IN THEIR TEENS. EVEN THOUGH THERE WERE MANY PEOPLE AROUND, NO ONE SAW ANYONE GET CLOSE TO THE VICTIMS

IDIOT! GROSS!
LIKE IN CUTEY HONEY FLASH!
HOHOHO! HE'S PROLLY WATCHING!
RIGHT, RIGHT!
UMMM... COULD KAMAITACHI BE CAUSED BY THE WIND...?
PEOPLE SAY THEY ARE CAUSED BY SUDDEN GUSTS.
THAT DOES MAKE ONE THINK OF KAMAITACHI...
ATMOSPHERIC CURRENTS SUDDENLY CREATE A VACUUM AND END UP CUTTING THROUGH THINGS...
POSSIBLY FROM THE BEGINNING IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT KAMAITACHI FLY IN WITH GUSTY WINDS

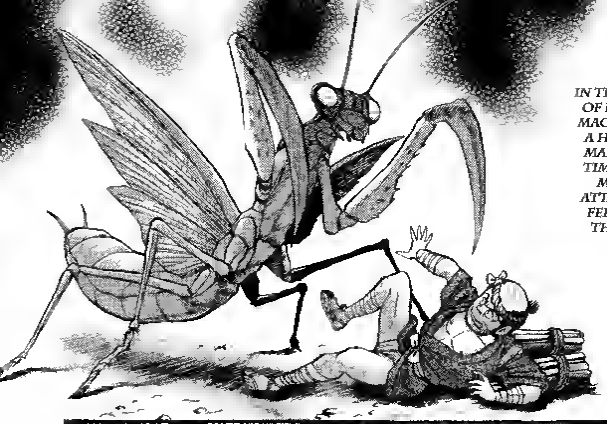
In olden times, kamoitachi were often seen in the mountain regians of Mino and Hida... The theory is that because of the surrounding mountains, a particuiar wind moy have caused them.

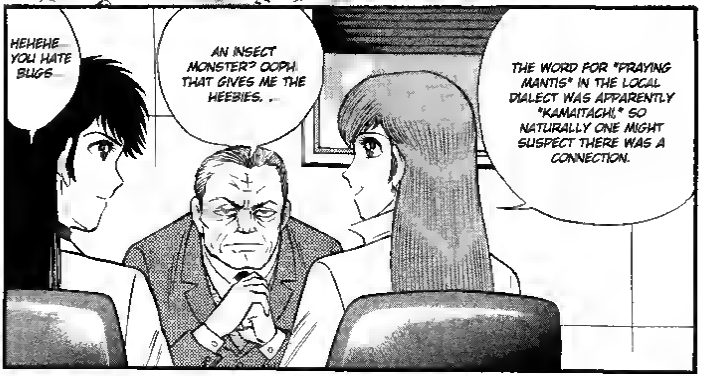
The legends about kamaitachi are all pretty much the same. A man struggles along a mountain path against gusting winds. When he finally gets home...
He sees that his leg is red and bleeding...
When he looks at his leg
His wife asks, "what happened to your leg?"
In alden times this kind af thing happened from time to time... They said it must be a weasel flying on the winds.

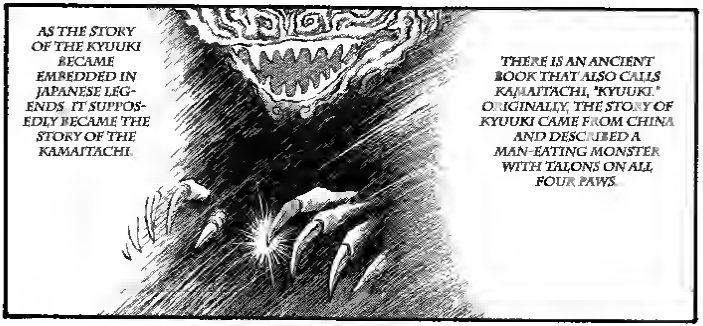
THEY WERE SAID TO BE SPIRIT MONSTERS WHO RODE THE WIND, SUDDENLY CUT PEOPLE AND THEN VANISHED.
THEY THOUGHT KAMAITACHI RESEMBLED WEASELS WITH LONG CLAWS LIKE SHARP SICKLES

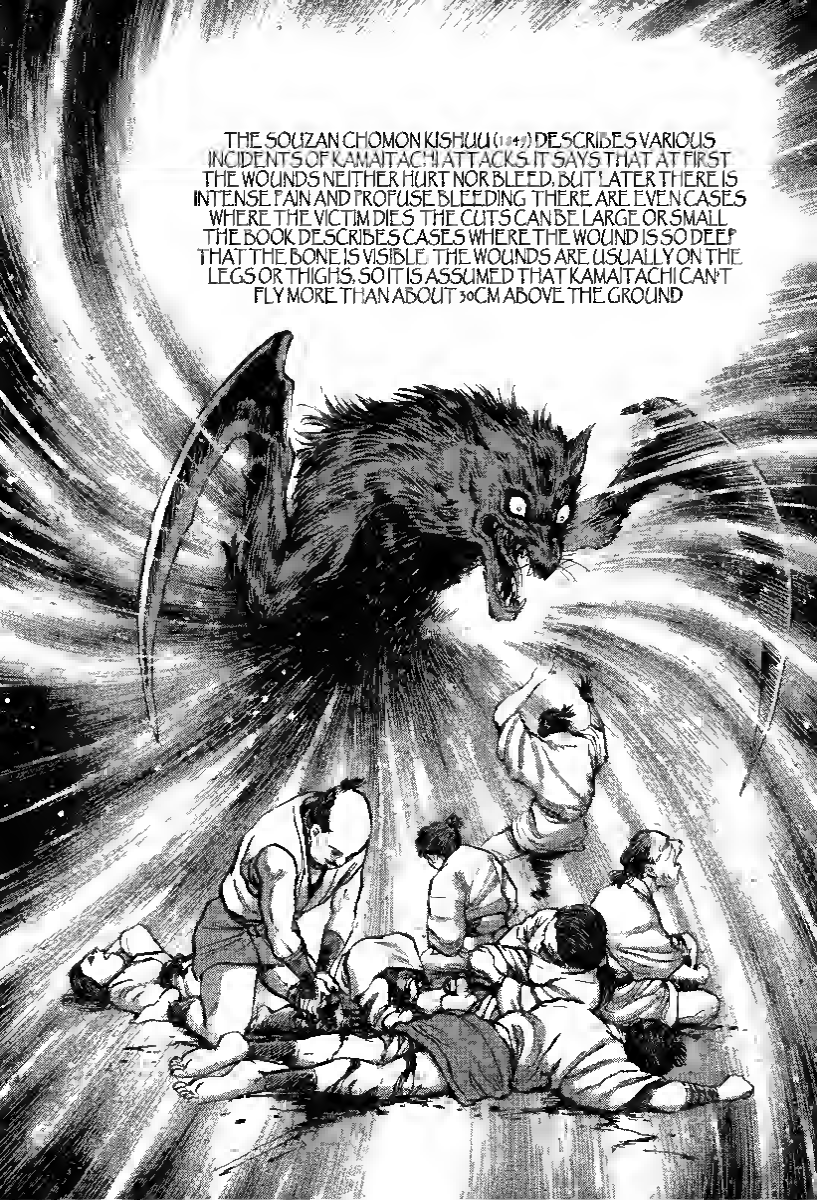

THE FIRST GOD RUSHED UP AND THE SECOND MADE THE CUT. THE THIRD APPLIED A MEDICINE THAT KILLED THE PAIN. .
IN THE MOUNTAINS OF MINO AND HIDA THEY WERE SAID TO BE A TRINITY OF GODS.

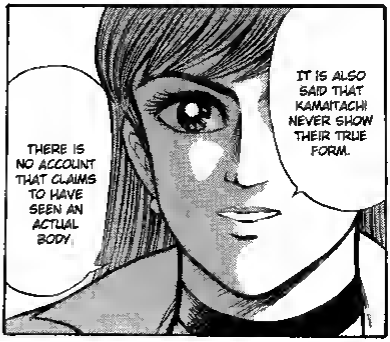
IT'S ALSO A MOUNTAIN REGION. IF A PERSON TRIPPED OR STUMBLED WHILE WALKING A MOUNTAIN PATH, THESE KAMAITACHI WOULD ATTACK IN A RAGE, COVERING THEM IN BLOOD... FOR THIS REASON THE VILLAGERS WERE ALWAYS ESPECIALLY CAREFUL WHEN WALKING THE PATHS.
IN NIIGATA PREFECTURE BETWEEN MT. YAHIKO AND MT. KUGAMI THERE IS A PLACE CALLED KUROSAKA WHERE KAMAITACHI WERE SUPPOSEDLY SEEN.

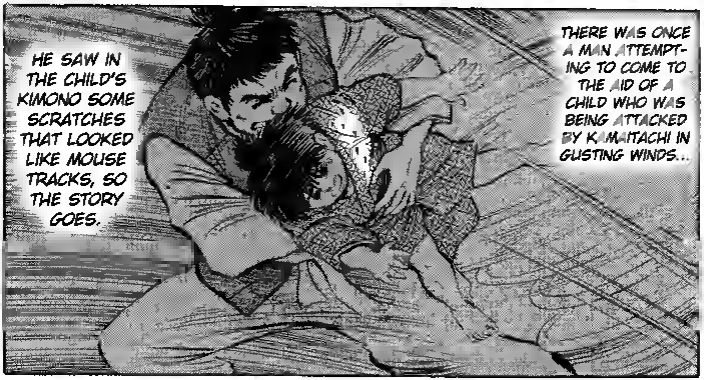

IN THAT SAME PREFECTURE OF NIIGATA IN KATAKAI-MACHI OJIYASHI THERE IS A HILL CALLED "PRAYING MANTIS HILL." IN OLDEN TIMES A GIANT PRAYING MANTIS SUPPOSEDLY ATTACKED ANYONE WHO FELL OVER. APPARENTLY THE WOUND WAS AS IF FROM A SCYTHE


HEHEHE... YOU HATE BUGS...
AN INSECT MONSTER? OOPH. THAT GIVES ME THE HEEBIES...
THE WORD FOR "PRAYING MANTIS" IN THE LOCAL DIALECT WAS APPARENTLY "KAMAITACHI," SO NATURALLY ONE MIGHT SUSPECT THERE WAS A CONNECTION.

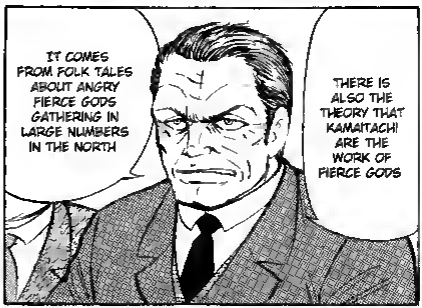

AS THE STORY OF THE KYUUKI BECAME EMBEDDED IN JAPANESE LEGENDS, IT SUPPOSEDLY BECAME THE STORY OF THE KAMAITACHI.
"THERE IS AN ANCIENT BOOK THAT ALSO CALLS KAMAITACHI, "KYUUKI." ORIGINALLY, THE STORY OF KYUUKI CAME FROM CHINA AND DESCRIBED A MAN-EATING MONSTER WITH TALONS ON ALL FOUR PAWS.


THE SOUZAN CHOMON KISHUU (1724) DESCRIBES VARIOUS INCIDENTS OF KAMAITACHI ATTACKS. IT SAYS THAT AT FIRST THE WOUNDS NEITHER HURT NOR BLEED, BUT LATER THERE IS INTENSE PAIN AND PROFUSE BLEEDING. THERE ARE EVEN CASES WHERE THE VICTIM DIES. THE CUTS CAN BE LARGE OR SMALL. THE BOOK DESCRIBES CASES WHERE THE WOUND IS SO DEEP THAT THE BONE IS VISIBLE. THE WOUNDS ARE USUALLY ON THE LEGS OR THIGHS, SO IT IS ASSUMED THAT KAMAITACHI CAN'T FLY MORE THAN ABOUT 30CM ABOVE THE GROUND




THERE WAS ONCE A MAN ATTEMPTING TO COME TO THE AID OF A CHILD WHO WAS BEING ATTACKED BY KAMAITACHI IN GUSTING WINDS...
HE SAW IN THE CHILD'S KIMONO SOME SCRATCHES THAT LOOKED LIKE MOUSE TRACKS, SO THE STORY GOES.

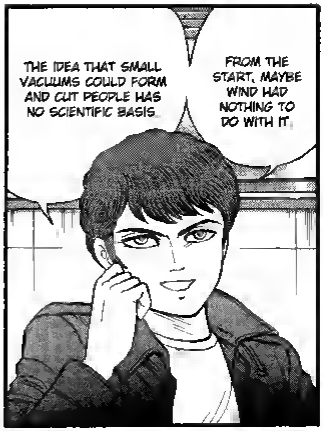
* A collection of 1000 ghost stories and humorous tales from the Edo period.


IT COMES FROM FOLK TALES ABOUT ANGRY FIERCE GODS GATHERING IN LARGE NUMBERS IN THE NORTH
THERE IS ALSO THE THEORY THAT KAMAITACHI ARE THE WORK OF FIERCE GODS

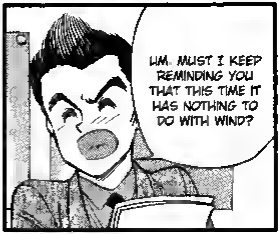
KANDENJIHITSU" DESCRIBES PEOPLE BEING ATTACKED BY A WIND GOD IN A THREATENING POSE WITH A LONG SWORD.
AGAIN, RELATED TO THE WIND, SEE?

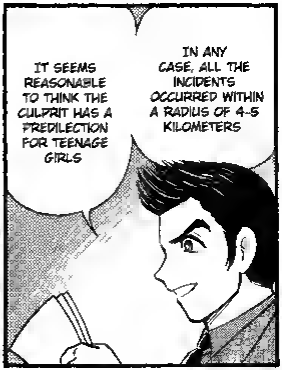
VIOLENT SHIFTS IN ATMOSPHERIC CURRENTS CAUSE MOMENTARY VACUUMS THAT CAUSE CUTS WHEN THEY BLOW AGAINST PEOPLE...
OH...
VACUUM CUTS, EH?
LIKE IN THE MANGA, "AKADO SUZUNOSUKE."
OOOLD!
Right... Even outside mountainous areas like Nagano and Gifu, there are legends from Takya, Tohaku, and Hakkaida as well. In Kanagawa there were "kamakaze," in Shizuaka "akuzenkaze," and in Nagaya "shimuji." Out in the west country they used the name "kazekama."
IN ANY CASE, ALL OF THEM ARE RELATED TO THE WIND
THAT IS, THERE HAVE BEEN INCIDENTS ON DAYS WITH NO WIND..
OLD LEGENDS ARE ONE THING... BUT THE CURRENT INCIDENTS DO NOT SEEM TO BE RELATED TO WIND.
UM.

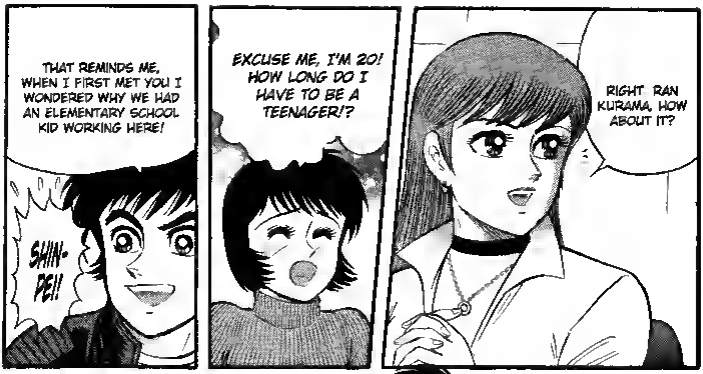
RIGHT. ANOTHER THEORY IS THAT IT WAS A SPLINTER OR PEBBLE CARRIED IN HIGH SPEED GUSTS THAT CAUSED THE CUTS
OH, I GET IT.


THE IDEA THAT SMALL VACUUMS COULD FORM AND CUT PEOPLE HAS NO SCIENTIFIC BASIS
FROM THE START, MAYBE WIND HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT

ガタン
?
YOUNG WOMEN? HOW ABOUT A STING OPERATION?
YOU'RE THE ONE HERE WHO LOOKS LIKE A TEENAGE GIRL


UM. MUST I KEEP REMINDING YOU THAT THIS TIME IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH WIND?


IN ANY CASE, ALL THE INCIDENTS OCCURRED WITHIN A RADIUS OF 4-5 KILOMETERS
IT SEEMS REASONABLE TO THINK THE CULPRIT HAS A PREDILECTION FOR TEENAGE GIRLS


THAT REMINDS ME, WHEN I FIRST MET YOU I WONDERED WHY WE HAD AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL KID WORKING HERE!
SHIN-PEI!
EXCUSE ME, I'M 20! HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO BE A TEENAGER!?
RIGHT RAN KURAMA, HOW ABOUT IT?

DANG I WAS APPOINTED AS KURAMA'S BODYGUARD. OH, WELL... IT'S MY FIRST JOB WITH HEAVEN, INC. BETTER NOT SCREW IT UP!
DOES THIS MEAN I HAVEN'T DEVELOPED?
I SUPPOSE THIS HIGH SCHOOL UNIFORM LOOKS GOOD ON ME AFTER ALL...
WELL ...!?

IT'S PRETTY BAD TO HAVE YOUR CLOTHES SUDDENLY CUT UP...
KURAMA IS PROBABLY PRETTY SCARED, HUH. I SHOULDN'T BE SO SELFISH.
STILL, THIS KAMAITACHI THING IS A BIT DISGUSTING
THESE TENGU GUYS ARE SEVERE
NOBODY WANTS THEIR CLOTHES CUT UP, SO THE NEWBIE GETS THE JOB...
TOO CUTE! PERFECT!
TOO.
I LOVE IT... I WANNA SLICE IT UP...

KYUHAHAHAHH!!
村
EHE!?

!?
RAN!?

SH..SHE DISAPP-EARED!
WHERE DID SHE GO!?

KURAMA'S CLOTHES WERE SHREDDED IN AN INSTANT, AND DID I CATCH A GLIMPSE OF HER CUTE WHITE BEHIND!?
MAYBE I IMAGINED IT...
BUT I'M SURE I WAS RIGHT BEHIND HER..

DISAP-
PEARED
!?
!?
WHERE
IS RAN
KURAMA!?

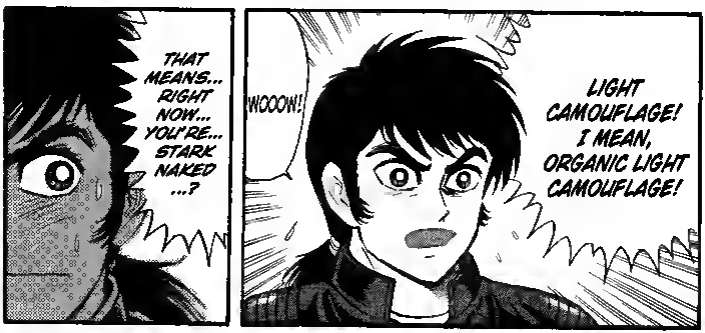
INU!!...
SHINPEI!?
HUH?

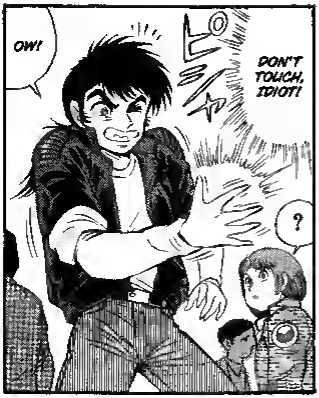
WHAT
EXACTLY
HAPPENED
!?
DO
KAMAITACHI
HAVE THAT
MUCH
POWER?

HUH?
I'M RIGHT HERE BY YOU.
QUIT SQUIRMING.
KU-KURAMA? WHERE ARE YOU?
SK... SKILL?
ABSOLUTELY. BUT IT ISN'T A CLOAK. IT'S A SKILL.
THE THING YOU WEAR THAT CAUSES YOU TO DISAPPEAR?
HUH? INVISIBILITY CLOAK?
HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE TENGU'S INVIS-IBILITY CLOAK?
DOES SUCH A CONVEN-IENT THING ACTUALLY EXIST?
HAT... OVER THERE?
HUH? WHICH?
NEVER MIND THAT. FOLLOW THAT GUY WE JUST PASSED WITH THE HAT.

I FELT AN EVIL POWER COMING FROM HIM!
UM... BESIDES THAT...
I KNOW BUT I'M SURE IT'S HIM...
THAT GUY? HE WASN'T CLOSE WHEN YOUR CLOTHES WERE TORN
VANISHING BEAUTY! CALL ME A VANISHING BEAUTY!
AH OKAY!
SO YOU'RE A VANISHING BEAUTY!?
TENGU'S INVISIBILITY CLOAK?
CAN I ASK YOU MORE ABOUT THIS SKILL?
DOES IT MEAN YOU'RE AN "INVISIBLE WOMAN?"
RIGHT— BUT I DON'T REALLY BECOME INVISIBLE.
...WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

THAT IS, THE LIGHT BENDS AROUND MY BODY SO THAT YOU SEE WHAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE. I'M NOT REALLY INVISIBLE.
THE CELLS IN MY BODY EMIT AN AURA THAT BENDS LIGHT WAVES AROUND IT. IT IS MY SPECIAL POWER.


THAT MEANS... RIGHT NOW... YOU'RE... STARK NAKED ...?
WOOOW!
LIGHT CAMOUFLAGE! I MEAN, ORGANIC LIGHT CAMOUFLAGE!


OW!
DON'T TOUCH, IDIOT!
ピシャ
?

AREN'T YOU CHILLY...?
WHAT?
YEP! WHEN MY CLOTHES WERE CUT I GOT OUT OF THEM IMMEDIATELY SHOES AND ALL

I GUESS HE LIVES HERE...

I'M NOT COLD AT ALL. I ERECTED A BARRIER BOTH TO PROTECT AGAINST COLD AND INJURIES FROM THE CUTTING.
BUT FORGET THAT! DON'T LOSE THAT GUY!
ROGER, MISS VANISHING BEALITY...

WHY ARE YOU FOLLOWING ME..?
STATE YOUR BUSINESS.

DID YOU SEE THAT GIRL DISAPPEAR?
YOU KNOW SOMETHING, DON'T YOU!?

IT'S NOT THAT I'M FOLLOWING..
JUST COMING TO THIS APA-RTMENT...

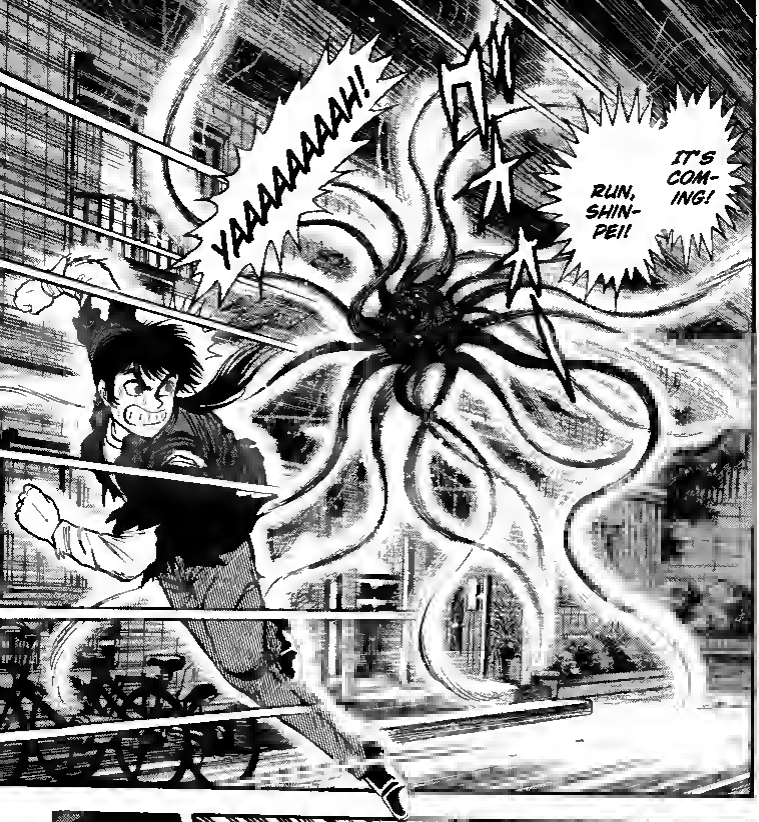
!?
I SENSE HER PRES-ENCE!
SHE DIDN'T RUN AWAY! SHE CAME HERE, EVEN THOUGH I CAN'T SEE HER!
ニャア
NO... SHE'S HERE! THE GIRL IS HERE!!
HUH !?
SHINPEI, LET'S SCRAM! HE'S DANGEROUS!
カッ

LET'S GO, SHINPEI! FULL SPEED!
ダダダダダ
MY CLOTHES ARE A MESS! WHAT THE HELL IS THIS GUY!?
HE'S THE CULPRIT! THE SPIRIT MONSTER KAMAITACHI... NO....
PERHAPS A BIT DIFFERENT THAN THE ORIGINAL KAMAITACHI!?
LOOK! HAIR!

THAT'S WHAT HE USED TO CUT THE GIRLS!
EVEN THOUGH IT'S LONG, IT LOOKS TO BE AS STRONG AS WIRE!
THERE'S A HUGE MASS OF LONG HAIR COMING OUT OF HIS MOUTH!
GEAAAW!
I DON'T SEE ANY BLOOD!
WAS I CUT, TOO!?
WAY TO GO!
YOU UNCONSCIOUSLY PUT UP A BARRIER!

うわあ～
HAIR-BALL!
THERE'S A MASS OF HAIR IN THE CENTER!!
KI

RAN, I SEE YOU!
KYA!
PA!
SORRY! I LOST MY CONCENTRATION AND LET YOU SEE ME!
BUT I THINK I'M GLAD...
FORGET THAT. LOOK AT HIM! IN THE MIDDLE OF THE HAIRBALL THERE ARE SEVERAL CAT SPIRITS ALL ENTANGLED TOGETHER. YOU SEE 'EM?
THE MAGATSUHI HAVE POSSESSED THE CURSED SPIRITS OF THE UNFORTUNATE CATS.


YAAAAAAAAH!
RUN, SHIN-PEI!
IT'S COM-ING!

ドドドド
ドドドド
ドドドド

AOI! USE THE FLAME OF PURIFIC-ATION!
OM AMRITOD
ॐ अमृत
HUM PHAT
ह फट्
UWAAAAH!
まあ

!
ガチャアアア
グルッ

ANIMAL FUR CONTAINS FAT, SO IT BURNS EASILY.
THE GRIEVED SPIRITS OF THE CATS BUILT UP IN HIS STOMACH TAKING THE FORM OF HAIR, AND THE MAGATSUHI POSSESSED THEM.
THIS MAN SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN KILLING AND EATING CATS...
BUT WHY CATS?
IN OTHER WORDS, HE CREATED HIS OWN SPIRIT MONSTER IN HIS STOMACH
INDEED?

PERHAPS IT'S A FORM OF PERVERTED SEXUAL DESIRE
HE LOVED PRETTY TEENAGE GIRLS BUT NEVER HAD THE COURAGE TO SPEAK TO THEM DIRECTLY.
HIS DESIRES TURNED SADISTIC, SO HE BEGAN TO KILL CATS.
THAT WAS PROBABLY WHAT STARTED IT.
IN OTHER WORDS, HE WAS RATHER PATHETIC
UWAAAH! A SEVERED HEAD!
IDIOT! DON'T JUST SHOW YOUR HEAD!
WHAT? YOU WANT ME TO SHOW EVERY-THING!?

!?
OKAY. HERE'S A LITTLE BIT, OKAY!?
HMMMM!
GROSS!! I THINK I SAW SOMETHING EVEN WORSE!

『天空之狗』第1卷 完

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